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# STRUGGLE

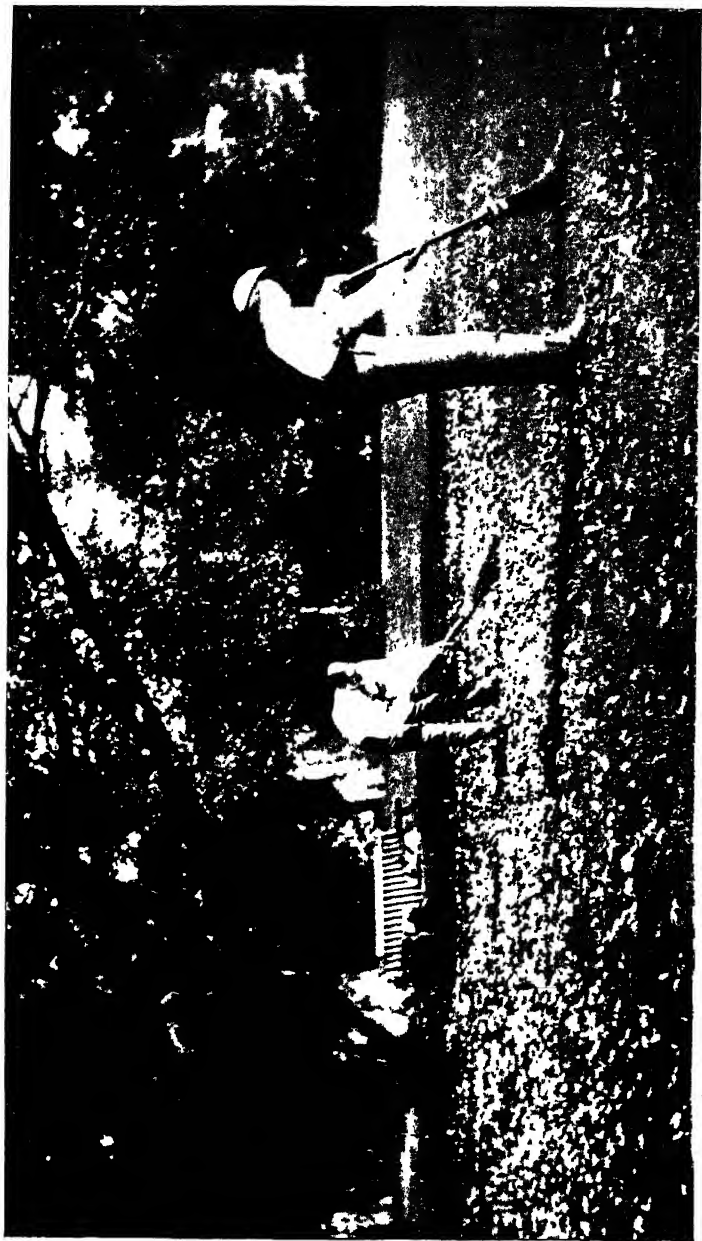
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*By the same Author*  
UPHILL—THE FIRST STAGE  
IN A STRENUOUS LIFE

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Lord Northcliffe (left) and the author sweeping up leaves at Sutton Place in pre-war days.

*Frontispiece.*

# STRUGGLE

1914-1920

BY

JOHN EVELYN WRENCH

1935

IVOR NICHOLSON & WATSON  
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DEDICATION

*Tibi quae, sive lucente benigno  
sole sive tempestate minante,  
cum tenerum tum seniozem, me,  
velut sidera nautas, direxisti.*

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## PREFACE

THE war years 1914-1918 have left a lasting impress on my generation. Our lives are divided into pre-war and post-war periods. Each of us interprets the lessons of the war in his own way.

I have recaptured the atmosphere of the war era by means of old diaries and letters. The beliefs and convictions of twenty years ago remain fundamentally unchanged. Strongest of all is the conviction that in its ultimate consequences to the world the coming together of the English-Speaking Peoples was of transcending import. The war will not have been in vain if the British Empire and the United States work together for the benefit of humanity. For if there be estrangement God pity the world—as Walter Hines Page said.

I hope this record of the second stage in a strenuous life demonstrates that it is possible to work simultaneously for the two causes:—the unity of the British Empire and co-operation between the British and American Commonwealths.

*The Duke's House,  
Lawrence Street,  
Chelsea.*

E. W.





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# STRUGGLE

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# Chapter I

## AN ENGLISH SPRING

APRIL—JUNE, 1914

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# Chapter I

## AN ENGLISH SPRING

I LOOK back on the spring of 1914 and it stands apart.

As a rest from strenuous organising, I spent joyous days at the week-end with a chosen companion exploring out-of-the-way parts of London, and when the days lengthened we went further afield in a Ford car purchased for £140. It was ten years since my previous experience as a car-owner. "The little Ford—LL 800—two-seater is a wonder, it is no trouble and able to go up any hill and averages comfortably, without rushing, 25 miles an hour." (*Letter to parents.*) The Ford served me faithfully for eight years, and after the war, when there was a car shortage, I was offered what I gave for it.

The English spring slowly unfolded. I saw its wonder with new eyes—the eyes of the Australian or the Canadian, who beholds its magic for the first time. Those eighteen months wandering round the Empire had given me new standards of comparison.\* Here was no sudden transition from winter to summer. Spring lasted from the winter jasmin of January to the dog-roses of June. The countryside of the Motherland was a shrine of loveliness for citizens of the new Englands across the seas to claim as their own.

I watched the miracle of spring week by week, almost day by day. There were the first timid snowdrops, near the Bandstand in Hyde Park, peeping out fearfully at the bleak and windswept world. Then came the catkins in the hedges, and the great carpet of gold, purple and white crocuses under the elms at Hampton Court Palace, where the ducks delighted to waddle by the side of the wind-rippled water. Outside the gate an old almond tree, a

\* I had just returned from a tour of 64,000 miles round the Empire. See *Uphill*. Publishers: Ivor Nicholson and Watson.

mass of pink blossom, stood on guard, challenging the March winds to do their worst.

On Saturday mornings, as I went to fetch my car from a Pimlico garage, I was sped on my way by the music of a German band, one of the many that journeyed about England. To the strains of "The Rosary," or perhaps "The Tales of Hoffmann," I would set out on my trip of discovery.

When the reign of the crocuses was over the dancing golden daffodils came into their own. "To Kew, treading on air, breathing in the spring. Mounds of golden daffodils swaying gently in the wind with a carpet of blue squills, and a realisation of the marvel of life." (*Diary.*) Whenever daffodils come to mind it is of Kew in early spring that I think, with the blackbirds and thrushes singing their hearts out in their enchanted kingdom. Outside, a hundred yards away, was the ordinary world with its red buses, "Underground," policemen and rows of villas. Was there ever such value for a penny?

In Easter week my Ford and I found ourselves on the Norfolk coast.

This is a house consisting of three coastguard cottages knocked into one, on the very edge of the shore, so that when the windows are open you look right on to the sea and do not even notice the beach. One has the feeling of being on board a steamer. . . . The interior is charming and is done up in white. Everywhere there are glass bowls with primrose blossoms floating on the surface of the water. I sleep in a dear little farmhouse three minutes away. Apple blossoms sway in the breeze outside my bedroom window, which overlooks a mere on which wild fowl swim to and fro. (*Letter to parents.*)

The mornings were spent on the Sheringham golf links and the afternoons were devoted to long walks along the cliffs, where the gorse made great splashes of gold against the pale-blue April sea. The air, straight from far regions, had a Northern tang, for which residents in the tropics would have given a year's salary. Hovering larks, far overhead, proclaimed unceasingly the joy of living.

In the evenings after dinner our hostess turned out the lights in the sitting-room, and the windows overlooking the sea were thrown open. A log fire crackled, and Filson Young, a member of the party, conjured up for us the experiences of the day in improvisations at the piano. The swish of the sea was in our ears as we sat enthralled. The firelight made patterns on the hearth.

I remember asking a squatter in Queensland what was the most beautiful sight he had seen in the Old Country during his one and only visit "home." Without a moment's hesitation came the answer "The bluebells and the primrose copses in May." I agreed with him. Before the days of mass-motoring the acres of bluebells and the primrose copses in the home counties were safe from marauding bands.

My Ford was kept busy visiting places of historic interest to our oversea cousins near London: among them Wolfe's home at Westerham, Vancouver's grave at Petersham, Sulgrave Manor, the home of the Washington family, and Brington Church. I cherished an ambition to write one day a comprehensive handbook on such places, for the benefit of visitors from the Dominions and the United States. With the desire to trace the Mother Country's links with the New World I scoured the countryside and not a week-end passed without a visit to some village church. Here I touched the heart of England—the England that had given birth to great new nations across the sea. Even the motor age has not been able to spoil the village church, nestling behind its row of elms or trembling poplars, with a yew tree, silent sentinel, by the moss-grown lych-gate.

There is a wealth of material awaiting the author of the epic of the English-speaking race in the churchyards of Britain. There he can study the story of the evolution of an island people into a world commonwealth astride the continents. Many of the men lying buried in these ancient graveyards unknowingly gave their lives so that the English language should gradually become the medium

of exchange for men's thoughts in two hemispheres. If the great colonising powers of the past have had to give place to the English-speaking peoples there has been a heavy price to pay. Many a village church contains tablet or tomb to the memory of a son of Britain whose life was given in the service of the State in some far corner of the world. On the Spanish Main, in the American colonies, in India, South Africa or at the Antipodes Empire-building has demanded its toll of young life.

The climax of joy was a visit to Little Gidding in Huntingdonshire, familiar to readers of John Inglesant. The pilgrimage was made by car from Huntingdon along a road flanked by hawthorn trees in blossom. We walked through lush meadows, where lambs lay among the buttercups, to Little Gidding Church—remote and unspoilt. The caretaker withdrew and left us to picture Mary Collet at her prayers. No wonder that John Inglesant carried away a lasting picture of the scene.

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## Chapter II

RUMBLINGS OF THE STORM

BALKAN MEMORIES

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## Chapter II

### THE RUMBLINGS OF THE STORM

#### BALKAN MEMORIES

SUNDAY, 28 June, 1914, is a date which will remain engraved on the minds of men for all time. I turned up an old diary to ascertain how I had spent that fateful day. In the morning I sat with a companion under an elm in Kensington Gardens reading *The Lost Word*. Healthy and rosy-cheeked children were noisily playing round, having strayed away from their neat nursemaids. In the afternoon we went to Jordans, near Beaconsfield, where William Penn lies buried in the grass plot adjoining the little Meeting House of the Friends. A simple tombstone marks the grave of the founder of Pennsylvania. I contrasted the quiet of his resting-place with the bustling scene upon which his effigy in bronze looks down from the City Hall of Philadelphia, "the city of brotherly love." From Jordans we went to the churchyard at Harrow-on-the-Hill, referred to in my guide book as "that crowning point of the Middlesex Alps!" I forgive the author his hyperbole, for he was responsible for arousing in me the desire to make a scrutiny of the local epitaphs. Among them I found the sad story of a certain Thomas Port, who "was killed by losing both legs in a railway accident in 1838, aged 33 years":

"Bright rose the morn, and vig'rous rose poor Port  
Gay on the train, he used his wonted sport;  
Ere noon arrived his mangled form they bore,  
With pain distorted, and o'erwhelmed with gore,  
When evening came to close the fatal day,  
A mutilated corpse the sufferer lay."

When I return to Harrow church, I do not do so to gaze on the tomb of obscure Peachey—on which Byron lay looking at the surrounding countryside—but

to revisit poor Port's last resting-place. From the churchyard we went to an hotel garden, where we had strawberries and cream, blissfully ignorant of the history that was being made a thousand miles away.

Next morning, as I read my papers, my attention was gripped by the flaming headline announcing the murder by Gavrilo Princip, a Servian student, of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria, heir-presumptive to the Austro-Hungarian throne, and of his morganatic wife, the Duchess of Hohenberg. I read every word about the tragedy in my three papers, for I had been in Bosnia and was acquainted with the Balkan countries and their problems. My visit to Serajevo in 1901 had left a vivid impression on my mind because it was in a way a microcosm of East and West—a small Stamboul. The Roman Catholic, Greek Orthodox and Muslim religions were practised there; and there Slav, Magyar, Teuton, Latin and Turk rubbed shoulders. After a night's journey from Budapest by train, it was surprising to find oneself in the East—right in the heart of Europe. The muezzin calling the Faithful to prayer from the minarets, the veiled women, the jostling crowds and the bazaars were surely there by mistake. Wandering in the welcome shade of the trees near the plashing fountain in the courtyard of the mosque, where the Turks were performing their ablutions before prayer, I realised anew that Austria was a Colonial Power, with problems like those confronting Great Britain. Bosnia was her Egypt; and Herr von Kallay, the Governor-General—a very remarkable Pro-Consul—was the Austrian Cromer.

As we travelled through the country, it was remarkable, I noted, to find "the people, half Christian and half Muslim, living in peace side by side." (*Diary*.) The Austrian Government did not look with favour on political agitation, for the doctrine of "self-determination" had not yet received recognition in Eastern Europe. But if Austrian rule was firm, it was also beneficent. Herr von Kallay said to my father, "Bosnia is my child." On all sides

we could see the interest he took in his offspring. The state was doing much to improve conditions in the country. Model houses were given to selected villagers in the hope that they would excite in others the desire for a higher standard of living. There were experimental farms, fruit-tree nurseries, fish-breeding establishments; while improved strains of horses, cattle, pigs and poultry were being introduced—work very similar to that my father was helping to do in Ireland. But unsatisfied Nationalism, with which I was so familiar in Ireland, was not prepared to accept a paternal government in place of freedom. I wondered what the final fate of the Balkans would be. In the nineties at Constantinople the days of the Turk in Europe had seemed numbered, but still he remained. The Turkish leaders rightly reckoned on dissension among the European nations.

I reflected on the reasons which could have prompted a youth of twenty to murder two inoffensive human beings whom he had never seen. I thought of the extent to which patriotic fervour can warp men's minds. Give men a political grievance and there are no lengths to which they are not prepared to go. I had discussed the "greater Serbia" ideal in Belgrade and elsewhere in the Balkans. I knew of the antagonism to the Hapsburgs. I recalled a voyage down the Danube in 1903, when on the moonlit deck, to the accompaniment of the rhythmic thud of the ship's engines, I had listened to the plaintive patriotic songs of Servian students. Their haunting melody long remained with me. Gliding down the swift-flowing Danube past half-a-dozen countries was good training for a student of international relations. A few hours after we had left Serbia and Hungary behind we were steaming along between Roumania and Bulgaria. Gone were the Servian students, and my diary records that Roumanian peasants in costume were dancing on deck. After a while I joined in. We grinned at each other instead of speaking, and I stamped my feet with all the vigour and enthusiasm of twenty-one, much to their delight.

The papers stated that the murder was a political crime, and Gavrilo Princip was said to be a cog in the wheel of the Pan-Serb movement. Why did Franz Josef not take a leaf out of our book and grant Dominion status to his disaffected domains here, in Croatia, and in Bohemia? Sooner or later there would have to be autonomy in these countries. Anyhow, the Balkan stew would probably go on bubbling during my life and one more Balkan crisis did not matter much. Fortunately, the British Empire was far removed from the Balkans. During my pilgrimage round the Empire in 1912, a Balkan war was in progress. When I was busy crusading in Australia and New Zealand there were occasional brief messages in the papers with the latest war news, but "down under" the citizen did not pay much attention to them. Why should he? What had he to say to these foreigners and their hates? Thank God the British Empire was right away from all that madness!



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## Chapter III

PARIS IN JULY 1914

THE TOURIST MECCA OF THE TWO AMERICAS—FRANCE'S  
UNPREPAREDNESS

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# Chapter III

PARIS IN JULY, 1914

THE TOURIST MECCA OF THE TWO AMERICAS

AS a director of the *Continental Daily Mail* I had to pay frequent visits to Paris. In the middle of July I decided to prolong my monthly stay, and in addition to attending to office affairs to carry out a long-cherished plan. I wanted to spend ten days in the French capital with my cousins, Hylda des Vœux and Kathleen Brooke.\* Kathleen lived at St. Jean de Luz, where she devoted her life to looking after her mother†, who was an invalid. The two sisters had not met for over a year as Kathleen could not leave my aunt for long. They decided to meet in Paris; and I was to take care of them. Each one of us had been living through difficult times and needed a complete mental change.

No one ever spent a happier ten days in Paris than I did. My cousins stayed at an old-fashioned hotel near the Étoile, patronised by the French aristocracy—the antithesis of the modern hostelry near the Bourse in which I was lodging. There were narrow, dark stairs and passages; Empire furniture; old-fashioned stoves; a domestic staff worthy of a private house; and a welcome absence of British visitors. The *concierge* slept in a little lodge. Sometimes I escorted my cousins back after the play, and as he had retired for the night they had to ring a bell which presumably tinkled over his bed. From the couch in his den he doubtless pulled the string without emerging from his slumbers. I suppose his subconscious self became used to interruptions.

\* Kathleen died in 1917 of tuberculosis. Her death was directly due to an illness contracted while nursing French *poilus* in the hospital at St. Jean de Luz. She was a rare being, whose life was spent for others.

† Lady Brooke, my mother's sister, and widow of Sir Victor Brooke of Colbrook, Co. Fermanagh, Northern Ireland.



The Paris of my youthful days—with visits to the Abbaye de Thélème in Montmartre, to tinselled and mirrored houses of pleasure, to cabarets and night cafés—belonged to another world to which I had no desire to return. The Paris I was now in was the real Paris, not the Paris primarily provided for the foreigner. As my guide I had a student of French history, who had been born in France and spoke French before English. Sight-seeing with her meant being carried back through intervening centuries and meeting some of the great figures in French history—François I, Henri IV, Richelieu, Fénelon, Bossuet, Louis XIV, Madame de Maintenon, Madame de Sévigné, J. J. Rousseau, Marie Antoinette, Madame Roland. For guide-books we took Baedeker and E. V. Lucas's delightful *A Wanderer in Paris*, without which no foreigner should emerge from his hotel.

In the summer of 1914 the tourist traffic was at its height. Every vessel coming from either North or South America deposited its human cargo at a French port. I envied France her tourist trade. Most trans-Atlantic visitors passed Britain by. In the restaurants and hotel vestibules the accents of every town from Boston to Buenos Aires assailed the ear. There were but few empty tables at the leading restaurants. The first morning of our visit we breakfasted in the Bois. The sun was shining. Paris out of doors on a July morning before the heat of the day, as one partook of coffee like nectar, crackly rolls and a lavish supply of iced butter in coils, served under a catalpa tree by a waiter in spotless apron, was intoxicating. By nine o'clock everybody seemed to be astir. Why is it that in London we miss two of the chief pleasures of existence: eating out of doors and early rising? But in London there is no Bois to breakfast in.

In those ten days I saw more of Paris than ever before or since. Instead of going to a succession of galleries, churches and palaces we concentrated on things with a human interest. Karl Baedeker would have shuddered

had he known how often we ignored his row of stars. We started off—as every visitor to Paris should—by paying homage to the Winged Victory of Samothrace at the Louvre. Then there were visits to the Conciergerie, where Marie Antoinette spent her last days ; to Versailles, with its Galerie des Glaces, where Germany dictated her terms to humiliated France after the Franco-Prussian war ; to the Petit Trianon ; to the Invalides, where lie the remains of Napoleon—the man who set Europe in flames from Moscow to Madrid. It was fortunate, I thought, that there were no Napoleons alive to set the nations of Europe at one another's throats.

I had never before been to Madame de Sévigné's hotel, the Carnavalet, now the museum of the City of Paris, and one of the most attractive museums in the world. To Mr. Lucas I owe a visit to the Compas d'Or in the rue Montorgeuil, one of the old coaching inns, the starting-place of the coach to Dreux. Alas, the Compas d'Or with its old-world court, with its smell of straw and farmyard, no longer exists.

### FRANCE'S UNPREPAREDNESS

My cousins had many French friends. On one occasion we lunched with a family, belonging to the old noblesse, that had weathered the Revolution of 1792 and regarded Napoleon's aristocrats as parvenus. They lived in a moated château, and had a high-ceilinged, parquet-floored *appartement* in Paris. In the salon after lunch we sat round uneasily on Empire furniture and watched the tricks of Poo Yong, my cousin's Pekingese. The conversation ranged from the Caillaux trial to the Irish question—then our main preoccupation in England. There were columns in the French Press about Madame Caillaux, who was charged with the wilful murder of M. Calmette, the editor of the *Figaro*. The case had become a *cause célèbre*, and to English ears the comments sounded very French !

Another topic attracting attention was the statement of M. Charles Humbert in the French Senate that the French forts facing Germany were "defective in structure, that the French soldiers had no spare pairs of boots, and that the French guns were without ammunition."\* He had said that if war were ever to break out, the *poilu*, apart from the boots he was wearing, would only have one reserve boot in his knapsack, and that one thirty years old! The following day M. Messimy, the Minister of War, virtually had to admit the truth of M. Humbert's charges. I did not take much interest in the discussion. France and Germany had lived peacefully side by side since the seventies, and there was no reason why they should not continue to do so.

The first time I recollect seeing any reference to the possibility of a war in Europe was on 6 July, when the *Daily Mail* Special Correspondent in Vienna stated that "the ever-trembling balance of peace among the nations is poised here in Vienna." But we were accustomed to Balkan scares and paid no heed to his message. In the third week of July Paris was entirely normal. The Paris Stock Exchange was showing a downward tendency, but Parisians and their guests had other things to think about. During the mornings of my stay I read in the *Paris Daily Mail* and in the French Press of the growing tension in Ireland. We seemed to be drifting to disaster. As Sir Edward Carson said, "I see nothing but darkness and shadows." But there were lighter topics to distract us. The Paris Press was concerned with the *dernier mot* in hairdressing for ladies. Two curls, resembling whiskers, were now to be worn pointing towards the ears instead of towards the cheeks. "This is to give a more charming effect."

A few days before my visit the first perforated nickel

\* The disclosures in the French Senate on 13 and 14 July about the military defects of France were often considered by the Allies to be one of the important events which caused Germany to "spring war upon the world." For further confirmation of this view, see *Behind the Scenes at the Front*, by George Adam, Paris Correspondent of *The Times*. Chatto & Windus, 1915.

coin had been introduced, and the old copper *sous* were to be replaced at an early date by these shiny 5-centime coins with a hole in the middle. Traffic in Paris was growing to such an extent that the formation of a *Ligue des Piétons* had been undertaken, with the object of establishing "an association against the dangers of street traffic." The visit of the aged Empress Eugénie, veiled, and draped in black, to the scene of her former triumphs was attracting attention. Paris was just preparing for the assembling in a fortnight's time—on 2 August—of the Esperanto Congress. We read with amusement in the continental news in the *Paris Daily Mail* that a fashion of *décolleté* necks for young men had been started in Germany. The new Schiller collar, thus called because it was familiar to Germans in the popular picture of the poet, was to be seen at German seaside resorts and even in Unter den Linden in the capital. On one of the last mornings of my visit the writers of the gossip columns in the Paris Press drew attention to the present fashion among "young bloods" of wearing their hair very long. The *Paris Daily Mail* stated that some of these "long-haired young gentlemen have already been seen with their locks tied round with a ribbon and bound across the forehead like the ancients." To meet the need a new kind of hairnet had been invented "to keep the hair tidy during violent exercise." Curious behaviour for citizens of one of the chief nations in Europe. I began to wonder whether some of the statements as to French decadence that I had heard in Germany might not have some truth in them. I little thought then that within three or four weeks these young men and their generation would be dying like heroes in defence of their soil.

On our last evening we made a pilgrimage to the tomb of Abelard and Héloïse at Père Lachaise cemetery. As we stood near the monument we tried to make a mental picture of their first meeting in the precincts of Notre Dame. The clever girl of 15 or 16, erudite beyond her years, the famed rhetorician, who had the intellectual youth of the

day at his feet, twenty-two years senior to his pupil ; the plucking of the forbidden fruit, and then a story worthy of a Greek tragedy. I toyed with the idea that one day I would like to establish in London a museum of the great love stories in history, from Héloïse to Mrs. Browning.



# Chapter IV

## EVE OF WAR

A PRE-WAR WEEK-END—SATURDAY, 1 AUGUST, 1914

# Chapter IV

## EVE OF WAR

### A PRE-WAR WEEKEND

THE war divided the lives of my generation into two halves. "Before the war" was one era, "after the war" another. I had seen the last two decades of the nineteenth century. I had witnessed the passing of Victorianism. I had taken part in the hectic Edwardian years; "pre-war" for me signifies youthful struggles, enthusiasms, ambitions, follies, failures, and successes. It was an age of growth in Empire-consciousness. It was an age of self-confidence in which we repeated "God's in His Heaven; all's right with the world," and believed it. When King George came to the throne, an era of undreamt prosperity and glory seemed, despite the pessimists, to lie ahead of the British race—the people of destiny.

"After the war" to me sums up great fervour, disillusionment and a new hope. Different values, a renewed consecration of purpose in a world in a state of flux. Gone is the easy assurance of pre-war days. There is a greater realisation of the complexity of life. But as the years pass a growing Faith.

The last week-end party I attended in the "old" world, that other existence upon which we now look back as history, was after returning from Paris in the last days of July, 1914. Lady Wantage, one of the few remaining great hostesses of the Victorian era, asked me down to Lockinge, her lovely place in Berkshire, remote from the outside world. We might have been at the other end of England, instead of only fifty miles from London. The ordered dignity of one of England's stately homes was impressive. Lady Wantage was a gracious hostess. When she came into the drawing-room with a lace cap over her snow-white hair, with four-fold coils of huge pearls



worth a king's ransom round her neck, with wonderful lace over her shoulders, in her rustling black silk dress, walking with the help of an ebony cane, and—I think—wearing black silk mittens, the buzz of conversation ceased. Among the members of our party were an Oxford professor and his wife, Miss Cholmondeley, the authoress, with whom I made friends; a politician or two, and some relatives. On Sunday morning we went to worship in the wonderful little creeper-covered church, dating from Norman times, which stood in the garden immediately under my bedroom. Bushes of flaming red roses grew by the porch. In the afternoon some of us went for an eight-mile walk. We discussed the coming tragedy in Ireland. Whether we talked of the Balkan situation I have no recollection—my diary makes no mention of the fact. Our minds were focussed on Ireland; and the latest rumour from the Curragh—that many officers would throw up their commissions rather than fight Ulster—was repeated.

As late as 23 July the Austro-Servian crisis was dismissed in the morning paper with a sixteen-line paragraph, while on the following day the Caillaux trial had a three times greater "news" value—to adopt the vernacular of Fleet Street—than the Austro-Servian crisis.

The last week of July opened ominously. The Ulster Conference at Buckingham Palace had broken down and Russia had decided to support Serbia. But as late as Thursday, 30 July, I had no fears that Great Britain would become involved, and I still hoped to join my parents two days later at Bad Nauheim in Germany, whither my father had gone for heart treatment. Northcliffe sent for me unexpectedly on Thursday evening. I found him sitting in his armchair in his room at Printing House Square, surrounded by telephones and galley proofs. He told me that France was involved and that our War Office was taking precautionary measures.\* Northcliffe

\* The first time I learnt at first hand of the "precautionary measures" taken by our War Office was on Monday, 27 July, when my cousin Major Victor Brooke

advised me to cancel my German visit. But on Saturday, 1 August, I was still so confident that Great Britain would not be involved that I started off on my usual Saturday's trip of discovery in my Ford.

#### SATURDAY, 1 AUGUST, 1914

There are some days in life that are chiselled in the memory. Saturday, 1 August, 1914, is such a one for me. To forget the uncomfortable outside world, with its mobilisations and declarations of war, we made a Dickens pilgrimage. By way of Gads Hill and the Leather Bottle at Cobham, Kent, we went through the country of Dingley Dell to Rochester. The Garden of England never looked more lovely. There were wheat fields, green and yellow. Suddenly there would be a splash of scarlet—a great strip of poppies dividing the wheat from the silver-green barley, swaying in the breeze. We left the car by the roadside and wandered along a path worn by cart wheels. At the edge of the ruts camomile grew, and alongside was a hedge of blue chicory. White and tortoise-shell butterflies flitted from thistle to thistle, for there were tares among the wheat. Overhead there were larks. Every now and then birds would flash across the ears of ripening corn. There was a soul-satisfying harmony—the measured swish of the tails of the farm horses to keep off flies, the rustle of the wind in the corn, round which the convolvulus had entwined itself in a too-loving embrace, and the drone of bees.

We were glad to have arrived at our journey's end when we got out of the car in the garage of the Bull Inn, Rochester. We were in the very yard from which Mr.

(9th Lancers), formerly military secretary to Kitchener, passed through London. He had just been spending the week-end in the country. His old chief, Kitchener, was in the house-party. K. walked about the garden with him alone and took him into his confidence. K. told him war was imminent and said "it will be a very big thing!" My cousin, who was never an alarmist, said "Things look very bad."

Winkle set forth on the "very good saddle horse," guaranteed by the Bull's ostler not to shy "if he was to meet a vaggin load of monkeys with their tails burnt off," on his memorable fifteen miles' ride to Dingley Dell. We went into the original coffee-room—at that time still used as the dining-room—in which the four Pickwickians dined. After ordering lunch we went to look at Rochester Castle: "magnificent ruin—fine place—glorious pile—frowning walls—tottering arches—dark nooks—crumbling staircases." But Mr. Jingle did not do full justice to the charm of the old building, with its view across the Medway, a winding ribbon of silver in the distance and the rolling countryside beyond. I have never seen so many varieties of pigeons—unless perhaps in Venice. They were grey, pure white, coffee-coloured and fawn. They regarded the castle as their property, and were preening themselves on the battlements. Their nests were in the holes of the stonework. Out of every hole peeped a pigeon's head—a street of pigeons looking out of their front doors. From all sides came a chorus of cooing.

We rambled about the battlements of the castle. We agreed that Mr. Pepys was overstating matters, or must have had an uncommonly bad head when he wrote, "a noble place, but, Lord, to see what a dreadful thing it is to look upon the precipices, for it did fright me mightily."\* With healthy appetites we returned to the Bull Inn. In our guide-book we had read that Hogarth and his friends enjoyed a two hours' dinner in 1732, consisting of "a dish of soles and flounders with crab sauce, a calf's heart, stuffed and roasted, the liver fried and the other appurtenances minced, a leg of mutton roasted and some green peas, all very good and well-dressed, with good small beer and excellent port." Our tastes were more modest: chops and fried potatoes and apple tart, ordered an hour previously. We only glanced at the old dining-room and

\* There is a delightful account of Rochester Castle in Walter Jarrold's *Highways and Byways of Kent*. Macmillan.

at the stairs leading up to the ball-room where Mr. Tupman and the "stranger," in borrowed dress clothes, disported themselves. As sensible sight-seers, we would eat first and pay homage to the shades of the Pickwickians afterwards. But fate decreed otherwise, and it was some years before we returned to the Bull Inn to finish our Dickens pilgrimage.

As we passed the office window, the manageress said, "Are you Mr. Wrench?" I nodded, and she said, "There's a telegram for you." It was from Northcliffe. My clever secretary in London had heard me say that I might motor to Rochester on Saturday. When Northcliffe rang up saying he must speak to me, she had assumed that hungry sight-seers and devotees of Dickens would obviously lunch at the Bull. The telegram said, "Return at once and come round to Printing House Square. France mobilising." Sorrowfully we turned our heads Londonwards. After all, the scaremongers were right: a war between the great Powers had come at last. If Germany had declared war against Russia, France would inevitably be dragged in. But surely there was no reason for Great Britain to be involved. In the Franco-Prussian war we had kept out, despite Queen Victoria's German connections. If we had managed to remain neutral in 1870, why not now? I opened the throttle wide and the Ford bounded and bumped along. I felt as in a novel. The Old Kent Road was drab and workaday. It looked uninviting in the rain. There were no more newspaper bills than usual, no excited groups at street corners, and everyone looked much the same. I parked the Ford opposite Blackfriars Bridge Station, and went across the courtyard of Printing House Square, where there was an electric atmosphere and Exchange Telegraph and Reuter messenger boys were coming in and out of the swing doors. Northcliffe had two or three of the *Times* staff with him. He told me that war between France and Germany was inevitable, and that Great Britain would probably be drawn in. Would I go to Paris for the duration of the war and

take charge of the *Paris Daily Mail*? My heart sank. I did not want to leave London. I did not want to leave my rapidly-growing Empire movement, just established in its new offices. But this was no time for personal considerations. Yes, I would, if he thought that was the most useful service I could render.

"When do you want me to go?"

"To-morrow morning."

From Printing House Square I went round to see Norman Angell, my predecessor on the *Paris Daily Mail*, at his flat in the Temple. There was something reassuring in the creaky stairs of 4, King's Bench Walk. The door knockers and bannisters had lived through centuries of crises. After all, Northcliffe was inclined to see current events in headlines. Probably there would be a last-moment climb-down. I recalled the fact that at the time of the Dogger Bank incident in 1904 war between Russia and ourselves was said to be inevitable. I had actually been sent down to see Lord Wolseley, then living in retirement at Glynde, Sussex, to invite him to write special articles for the *Daily Mail*, and yet the crisis passed.

We discussed an article Angell had written that morning in the *Daily Mail*. I think it must have been many years before Carmelite House again opened its columns to him. With that lucidity of exposition for which he is famous, Angell had written:

Whatever may be the future place of the Slavs, Teutons, French or English in the world, this war is not going to settle it or seriously to affect it, except to render the condition of all more barbaric. We may inflict or bear atrocious suffering, but, when it is all over, we shall see that it is as futile to settle problems of nationality and racial culture by war as an earlier generation found it futile to settle religious rivalries by that means.

Norman Angell was somewhat reassuring. He still thought we might keep out. The one essential was to narrow down the war area. We discussed the cleavage in the Cabinet; it was known that there was a strong anti-war party. We agreed that no one could get any

material advantage from the war, and I was certain that the war, whoever was involved, would show that Angell's theories, as expounded in *The Great Illusion*, were sound.

I recalled a letter Angell had written me four years before, in 1910, in which he said :

Northcliffe has struck the right point of view : I do not mean that necessarily he agrees with the thing,\* but he has come to realise that if we can get the Germans asking what they are really going to get out of aggression against us, the battle will be won, or that in any case it will tend to kill the fire-eaters and that that will be all to the good. I gather that he thinks the book may shift the whole discussion on to a more useful plane—"What do you, Germans, hope to get from attacking us?" I think he fully realises that a very useful work will have been done, whether the thesis as a whole be true or false, if we can get Germany, and Europe generally, asking that question.

He gave me some useful advice as to how best to tackle the situation in Paris.

I returned to my cousins' house† wondering whether Germany could be foolish enough to think of attacking us. After dinner I read aloud a chapter of *The Roadmender*.—Michael Fairless was a tried companion for great moments in life. On my return from Paris, presumably in the autumn, I was going once again to set up house for myself in a flat in Victoria Street. Most of the night I spent packing. While I was in the midst of putting in my things the *Daily Mail* rang up to tell me that France's mobilisation order took effect from 1 a.m., and that war between France and Germany was inevitable. I was also told that I would require a special permit to stay in Paris. So I went round to see Sir Arthur Nicolson‡—an old friend of my family's—at his house in Knightsbridge, in the dead of night, and got a special letter from him to Paris. I motored in the early hours of Sunday, 2 August,

\* Angell's thesis in *The Great Illusion*, that war was unprofitable.

† I lived there from 1908–1912, and on my return from my Empire tour in November 1913 till August 2, 1914.

‡ Subsequently Lord Carnock, Permanent Under-Secretary of State at the Foreign Office.

to the French Embassy and Consulate to get a passport and special permit.

It is so extraordinary suddenly changing all one's plans and spending most of the night rushing round to Passport offices. The only time I ever had a passport before was in Russia and Turkey. This morning, when dawn was breaking I motored along the empty streets and saw the Cross of St. Paul's standing out wonderfully against a pink sky. (*Diary.*)





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# Chapter V

## WAR

SUNDAY, 2 AUGUST—MONDAY, 3 AUGUST—  
TUESDAY, 4 AUGUST

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# Chapter V

## WAR

SUNDAY, 2 AUGUST

*"Governments in which a small selfish caste  
can unloose the scourge of war."* (Woodrow Wilson.)

AFTER a sleepless night I drove, provided with passport and permits, to Charing Cross. There an ordered chaos reigned. Hundreds of foreigners were hurrying home. Young French, German and Belgian recruits were leaving England in consequence of mobilisation orders. Half the population of Soho must have been at the station—hairdressers, waiters, chefs and musicians. Great Britain seemed to consist chiefly of foreigners! I have often wondered how many of those struggling fellow-passengers leaving England so hurriedly that morning ever returned. How many of them died in the war? There must have been many encounters on the battlefield of former employees from the same hotel, now seeking to kill each other.

I was lucky to get a place in the Pullman. Breakfast of buttered eggs and bacon, coffee and crisp toast was consoling in this topsy-turvy world. Great Britain would assuredly be able to keep out of the struggle; Germany could not be mad enough to challenge the might of the British Empire. We were packed like sardines on the cross-Channel boat. On the way to Paris I read the papers. Naturally, the crisis overshadowed all else. The headlines read "Germany declares war on Russia," "Mobilisation in France," "Martial Law in Russia," "Italy Neutral." Great scenes of enthusiasm were recorded in Russia, and I was interested to read that in the Red Square in Moscow, near St. Basil's and the Kremlin, with which I was familiar, the crowds were shouting "Long live the Emperor," "Long live Russia and the

Russian Army." I thought of the patient Russian *mujik*, accustomed to obey orders, and I wondered what would happen when once the whole might of "all the Russias" was mobilised. I knew what a splendid physique the Russian peasant had; I knew his loyalty to the Tsar. The only question in my mind was the problem of Russian organising capacity. But no doubt Russia had learnt her lessons in the war with Japan and would not be caught napping a second time. Anyhow, she would be fighting nearer home and not six thousand miles away from her base.

There were still one or two incongruities to be noticed in the papers—"copy" evidently prepared several days previously. I read of the proposal to place on the market coloured wigs for the fair sex. It was stated that before the summer had elapsed green, blue and mauve chignons would be a familiar sight which would no longer shock the æsthetic taste of Parisians. More serious were the accounts of the murder of M. Jaurès, the French pacifist, at the Café du Croissant thirty-six hours previously, which had created a sensation. The French Government had apparently plastered the walls of Paris with placards deploring the "abominable attack" and asking the public to remain calm and give an example of national unity "in these days of peril." Many of the Stock Exchanges of the world had closed. The Bank of England rate had gone up to 8 per cent.

The following letter describes Paris on Sunday evening, 2 August. The mention of a visit to Geneva referred to Northcliffe's original intention of moving the *Paris Daily Mail* to Geneva—neutral territory—for the duration of the war:

Paris, Hotel Louvois,

Monday morning, 3 August, 1914.

Pfister\* and I are going to try and get through to Geneva to-day, though whether we shall manage it I do not know as all the trains

\* The Advertising Director of the *Paris Daily Mail*, a Swiss, and one of the most capable advertising men I have ever met.

are stopped, other than those for the troops. We shall probably stay two nights and make preliminary arrangements for moving the paper, and then try to get back to Paris.

*Later*

I have just had a wire saying, "Stay in Paris, Chief\*," so apparently the Geneva idea is off. Yesterday afternoon before 5.0 I suddenly saw Notre Dame de Montmartre and the sun was shining on it and it looked very white. Paris is a very extraordinary place to be in just now. I feel as if I were in a book. It is not our Paris at all, it is a changed place, and in England you have no idea what is going on here. At the Gare du Nord the platforms were piled with baggage mountains high. There were no ordinary porters, but I managed to get a man with a special military band on his arm.

There were no taxis, or only a few; the rest have all been commandeered by the Government. I got a very rickety old horse-cab in the face of about twenty people. There are no omnibuses. Government has taken them all for the transport of meat to the Troops.

The streets are one black mass of people carrying flags and singing the *Marseillaise*. The Café Viennois is boarded up with the windows whitewashed, as the owner, who was an Austrian, has fled.

*Later*

The mob broke into the Café Viennois last night and broke all the windows and looted the place. I should like to go to a high mountain and get away from it all. It is terrible to see a mob that has gone mad. I hear that the mobilisation order which was posted up in the morning everywhere on the walls was greeted by rounds of cheering and young men threw their hats into the air. Several German shops have been looted. Troops are everywhere, and I was harrowed as I saw woman after woman crying and walking about with her man probably for the last time for months, as the soldiers are just off. War is so terrible, and it is only beginning, and I understand as I never have before what these partings are. Paris is mad with war fever. I never saw anything like it. All through the evening at our emergency meetings at the *Daily Mail* office in the rue du Sentier, and during the discussions, the *Marseillaise* kept floating up through the air into my room.

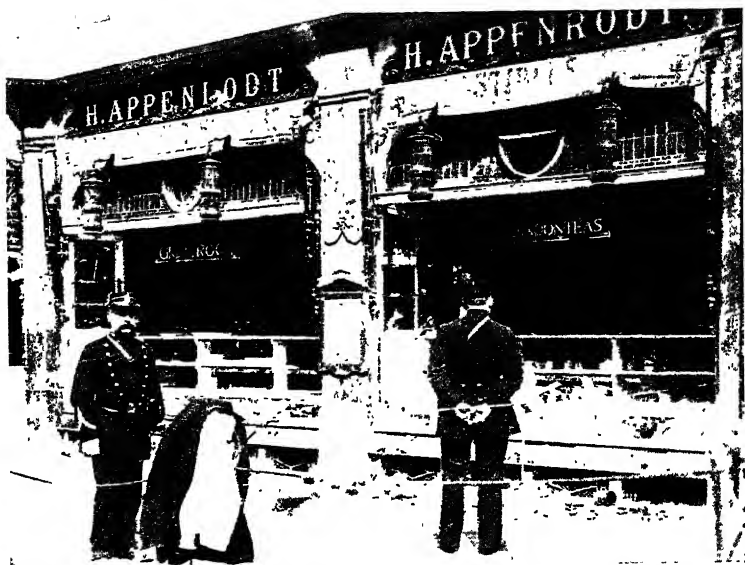
On arrival I went straight to the office and was there from 5.30 p.m. to 8.30 p.m. and then on and off from 9 to midnight, just slipping out to a Duval restaurant, at the corner, for a hasty meal. Everything and everybody was in a feverish state and I was busy holding conferences all the time, and must have interviewed about fifty or sixty of the office staff. There were all sorts of things

\* Northcliffe. I was in his employ for 14 years.

to be arranged, and wires kept coming and going. After leaving the office I walked along the Grands Boulevards and was carried along by the tide. (*Letter.*)

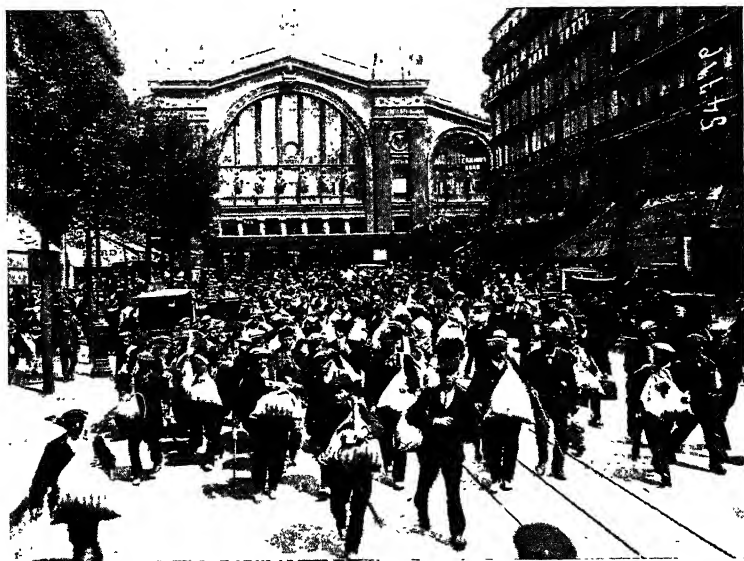
The sombre Paris mob of tens of thousands of human beings, shouting themselves hoarse and filling the Grands Boulevards from end to end, was like a river in flood. But it was a river of excited and "intoxicated" human beings, all ordinary restraints were brushed aside—on it rushed, breaking windows, shouting "à Berlin! à Berlin!", gesticulating and singing the *Marseillaise*. Its impulse was a mixture of hope and hatred, of indignation at Germany's challenge and a burning desire for revenge, to wipe out the bitter memories of forty years ago. I had seen great masses of human beings at the Diamond Jubilee and funeral of Queen Victoria, at King Edward's and King George's coronations, at an American Presidential procession of 4 November in New York. But this was the first occasion on which I had seen a great mass of human beings uncontrolled, and for the time being with authority in abeyance—except perhaps on Mafeking night in London.

Anti-German manifestations were taking place. The contents of Appenrodt's *delikatessen* store were seized by the mob and a bonfire made in the street. The little round tables and chairs of German-owned cafés were flung up on the canvas awnings above the pavements. The shutters were torn down and the large glass windows of the Maggi dairy firm and café were smashed, and another bonfire of the contents was made. Subsequently it was ascertained that the firm was Swiss! All German-owned shops came in for rough treatment, and probably the mob would have got quite out of hand had not detachments of cavalry arrived to aid the police. A minor problem was the difficulty of getting money changed, as the shopkeepers refused to accept large *billets de Banque*. There was a sudden dearth of gold and silver coins, and the banks were invaded by clamouring customers demanding change. I heard of one intelligent individual who, after walking about all the morning with a banknote and three



*Photo by Meurisse, 9, Faub. Montmartre, Paris*

Shops with German names had a bad time of it. Appenrodt's delicatessen were scattered in the Boulevards. August 2nd, 1914.



*Photo by Meurisse, 9, Faub. Montmartre, Paris.*



sous in his pocket, finally thus solved the problem. He took his fifty franc note to a post office, where he bought ten five-franc postal orders. He then cashed them at another post office.

### MONDAY, 3 AUGUST

Monday, 3 August, was an unpleasant day for the Englishman. Wherever he went he was treated with marked coolness. Even friends in private conversation asked anxiously, "*Les Anglais! Ils vont marcher! hein?*" What could I say?—I did not know. All I could reply was that on Saturday a majority of the Cabinet, I understood, was determined to keep Great Britain out of the conflict at all costs.

I had excellent opportunities to hear the views of the average Frenchman. We had a large French staff, and I was on friendly terms with the heads of departments. Many of our English employees lived in small French hotels and mixed with the French bourgeoisie. From 1914 dates my close and happy association with Eric Chaplin,\* who had been on the staff of the *Paris Daily Mail* for three years. Chaplin was a first-rate organiser, had tact to a remarkable degree and was an excellent linguist. Twenty-one years have only strengthened my regard for him. He has been my colleague for twelve years on the Board of the *Spectator*, and was a tower of strength to me in launching the All Peoples' Association in 1929. But to return to Paris. Chaplin and other British employees told me how unpleasant it was returning to their quarters each evening. Their former French friends treated them with open hostility. After consultation they decided to sleep at the *Daily Mail* office till the popular feeling became more normal. Accordingly, collecting their effects, they made impromptu beds on the floor of the rooms of the commercial staff,

\* Managing Director of the *Spectator* since 1926. Hon. Secretary of the All Peoples' Association from its inception until 1934, and now its Hon. Treasurer.



and there they slept, more or less in comfort, until Great Britain declared war.

During the mobilisation there were extraordinary scenes at the Gare de l'Est, where the troops entrained for such military centres as Châlons. I had never before realised what an upheaval the call to the colours implied in a conscript country. Thousands of men in response to the mobilisation order were suddenly withdrawn from their ordinary jobs. Untidily dressed, many unshaven, off they rushed to the station with every kind of package and bundle, and accompanied by sweethearts, wives, mothers, and by crowds of fervent patriots with gifts of flowers, tobacco, long loaves and other edibles. There was a mixture of singing and weeping. To British eyes the large number of bearded men was marked—even young men wore beards. This had the effect of giving the recruits an elderly appearance. The troops were frequently dispatched in closed-in goods waggons. War in actuality was a very different matter from "war" on the parade ground. It was a motley and untidy crowd of seemingly middle-aged men that was leaving for France's eastern front. Could a disciplined army emerge from this unpromising material?

Now that Germany had declared war on France, Parisians hoped, and appeared to believe, that the conflict would be of short duration. Whether those in high places were equally optimistic I doubt. I had no means of judging. The French General Staff must have known the strength of the German military machine which was now bearing down on them through the Ardennes. The French journalists I met said that owing to the gigantic nature of modern war the finances of no nation could bear the strain for long. There were animated discussions as to its possible duration. Most people thought the struggle would be over in six months. When Kitchener made his famous forecast of a three years' war, one Frenchwoman exclaimed with ridicule in her voice, "*Il est fou.*" I was sure that Kitchener was right. I thought of the South African war, and

recalled the fact that many of my friends, when they started out for Cape Town, had said they were afraid "the show would be over by Christmas." If a war with 300,000 Afrikaners had lasted nearly three years, a war with Germany would certainly last as long.

The German military machine was very much of a reality to me. I knew Germany intimately. I had lived in German military households. I had played tennis with German officers; I had eaten in mess. I had studied the German war game. I had a profound respect for the German genius for organisation. For four years I had conducted a business that took me on frequent visits to Germany. I had also lived in France and I knew that the Germans were more methodical than the French. I was afraid that France was in for a bad time. I was reassured, however, when I thought of the Tsar's legions, those fine bearded Russian officers in white tunics and top boots, whom I had met from Finland to the Caucasus. They would surely keep Germany busy on the eastern front. I also knew that my German friends were afraid of the Slav menace. They regarded all Slavs, whether Russians, Poles or Czechs, as belonging to a lower order of civilisation. They were inclined to underestimate French military prowess, as was perhaps natural after their experience in the Franco-Prussian war. But Russia, no. *There* was the danger. The spectre of the hungry Russian bear prowling across the plains of Eastern Prussia—making for the German capital, the home of Prussian "Kultur," disturbed them! German mothers lay in their beds and thought of stories of Cossack brutality and shuddered. As islanders we have never understood what the people of Eastern Germany went through in the early days of the war. Perhaps the German General Staff had no qualms; they knew with complete accuracy Russia's lack of equipment in heavy artillery. But the German public had no such knowledge. Hence the intoxication that followed Marshal von Hindenburg's defeat of the "Slav barbarians" at Tannenberg three weeks after the outbreak of the war.

The eyes of France were focussed on Berlin. What was happening at Vienna seemed remote and of no immediate concern. In Great Britain, also, we regarded Germany and not Austria as the foe. Austria-Hungary was merely the catspaw. There was traditional friendship between Great Britain and Austria-Hungary: the tie of sport united us.

I was glad to read in the papers that there seemed little likelihood of Great Britain being involved with Austria-Hungary. Mr. Lindsay Bashford, the *Daily Mail* Correspondent in Vienna, cabled on Monday, 3 August:

Everywhere I have been in Vienna to-day I have heard expressions of goodwill towards England. . . . The feeling in Austria towards England is essentially friendly. Austria believes that the English people will eventually understand the motives which prompt her to-day. She recalls that friendship with England is hereditary. She believes and hopes that the efforts of Sir Edward Grey may yet preserve the peace of Europe.

Letters from London kept me in touch with what was happening over there:—

London, 3 August. Monday.

When people talk about England fighting, that it will be iniquitous if she doesn't, etc., it rouses a sense of opposition in me, but as a matter of fact when I read the papers I don't see how we can stand aside. It made me so happy to see the messages sent by Australia, New Zealand and Canada as I knew how glad you would be, and I thought of the many thousands influenced by you all over the Empire.

It is quite possible that we may not be able to go to the country, as it seems so difficult to get hold of money. The tradespeople refuse to change five-pound notes, and I heard yesterday that the stations refuse them too, and as the Banks are shut till Friday, I don't see how one can get cheques cashed till then. Clubs refuse cheques for more than £1. I have just been reading Sir E. Grey's great speech. It is a clear statement as far as it goes, but personally I think that is all that could be said for it. If he laid more stress on the honour point of view it would be more stirring. He seems to take his stand on an economic basis and talks only of financial losses and takes as his main argument the point whether we fight or we don't we shall suffer heavily. He leaves entirely

out of account the appalling misery, sorrow, pain and death that war will entail. But I don't see how England can stand aside.

Monday night in Paris presented a complete contrast to Sunday. The authorities were in control and there was no serious rioting. One might have been in another city. Some attempts were made by the crowd to repeat the hooliganism of the previous day, but policemen with drawn sabres soon restored order. Infantry with fixed bayonets were placed in front of an hotel of German ownership. All cafés and restaurants were closed by 8 p.m. and the streets were practically deserted. War had begun. The liberty of the individual citizen counted no longer.

#### TUESDAY, 4 AUGUST

On Tuesday, 4 August, as soon as I was dressed, I rushed downstairs to the nearest kiosk to get the *Paris Daily Mail*. A huge heading spread right across the page, "Germany declares war on France," and then followed "Great Britain's assurance." "We will defend the coast of France and guarantee the neutrality of Belgium." Things were certainly moving. I did not see how Great Britain could keep out now—neither did my French friends. They became more friendly. They said that Germany had already violated Belgian neutrality.

Hotel Louvois, Paris.

Tuesday, 4 August.

Breakfasted at 9.30. There are no waiters. I thought Sir Edward Grey's speech quite splendid, the way he summarised our position masterly. I see nothing for it now but war in view of Germany's disregarding Belgium's neutrality. I was at the office all the morning and lunched with Hamilton Fyfe and his wife. He is doing special *Daily Mail* work. They are absolutely devoted to each other.

I wish I knew how long Northcliffe expects me to remain in Paris as now that we are going to fight, as I suppose we shall, I want to be in my own country and do my overseas work. It's so curious for me to be here in a position of trust, but from every standpoint

longing to be away, and yet feeling bound to do as Northcliffe wishes.

Anyhow, I think he will be pleased as we produced a very good paper this morning, much the best in Paris. From the Empire standpoint I am rather inclined to think that the war will be a good thing now that Germany has so definitely been the aggressor. It will have the effect of drawing us all closer together, including the French-Canadians. I only hope the French will be able to keep back the Germans' main attack, as I believe they are concentrating on the French north-east frontier." (*Letter.*)

From London I heard :—

Tuesday, 4 August.

I don't comment on war news, it is past commenting on. Everybody seems relieved now that war really seems inevitable. It is all very appalling. The money difficulty is all right now as they are issuing £1 and 10s. notes. . . .

Poor Emma\* is very unhappy, her four brothers have gone to the war.

\* A French maid.



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## Chapter VI

PARIS IN AUGUST, 1914

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PARIS IN AUGUST, 1914

ON Wednesday, 5 August, our days of suspense were over. Great Britain had declared war on Germany and Englishmen in Paris were no longer foreigners regarded with suspicion and disfavour. They suddenly found themselves treated as brothers and heroes. There were scenes of great enthusiasm. Cries of "*Hurrah pour l'Angleterre—Vivent les Anglais*" greeted them in the streets. The French people heaved one of the deepest sighs of relief in recorded time! With the wealth and power of Great Britain on their side they could face any peril.

Hotel Louvois, Paris,  
Wednesday, 5 August.

On the way to the office this morning I bought my *Daily Mail* and read all the war news. Most of it I already knew. I am entirely won over now as Germany has behaved so monstrously. I first had the news at the *Daily Mail* office before midnight, where I was until 12.30 this morning. I had no emotion left because I was tired, and also I suppose because we all regarded it as a certainty. I ought to have felt that it was a dramatic moment, but I honestly didn't. I was longing to get to bed. These last days here have been such days of strain that I feel like a wrung sponge. (*Letter.*)

In the evening I took a bundle of papers up to my room and lay on my bed with several pillows under my head to read undisturbed the news of the last three days. I had been too busy all day to size things up. Now at last I began to understand that one of the great chapters of history was opening: a period which would afterwards rank with the Napoleonic Wars—the fight against militarism and the rule of might. The event that moved me most deeply was John Redmond's speech in the House of Commons on Monday, which I had not had time to read before. The cause of Irish unity was very



near my heart. I understood both sections of the Irish people. A new and better era in Anglo-Irish relations seemed to be dawning. Redmond said amid great cheering that if the Government wished to do so they could remove all their troops from Ireland. Ireland's coasts would be defended by her armed sons, Catholics in the south and Protestant Ulstermen in the north. The English papers thus commented on this momentous declaration: "Englishmen know what gratitude means, and we venture to say that Mr. Redmond's words will never be forgotten."

The French papers afforded exciting reading. One paper had a flaming headline "The Holy War against Savages," another, "Hurrah for England." "Hurrah for England" certainly summed up the feelings of Paris on 5 August. Rumours as to the help Great Britain would give her ally began to spread. I was told dogmatically that Highland regiments, complete with kilts—*les petites jupes* as my French friends called them—and bagpipes had already landed at Calais and had received an ovation from the populace. By the middle of the week Paris was settling down to war conditions. The absence of men between the ages of 18 and 45 was noticeable. The few cabs running charged exorbitant prices. Many shops were still boarded up, to protect them against possible mob violence. On the façade of the Café de la Paix appeared the announcement that the proprietor had been called up for military service. Similar messages were chalked on many windows.

Since Monday Paris had returned to the days of the curfew. By order of the military governor lights were turned out by eight, the cafés were closed and the "Metro" ceased running at that hour. Anyone going home late was challenged by sentries. Three of the largest hotels were turned into Red Cross hospitals. On shops with foreign-sounding names appeared placards stating that the establishment was a "Maison Française."

The shipping offices in the rue Scribe were closed, and

8,000 Americans clamoured to get home. Owing to the difficulty of getting travellers' cheques cashed, 1,500 of their number were without money.

The production of a daily newspaper, even in its attenuated form, was no easy task. As the *Paris Daily Mail's* private telephone line to London had been taken over by the Government we organised a daily service of special couriers to and from London with the latest news. At first they travelled by way of Amiens, but subsequently traffic was deflected to the roundabout route via Arras, as Amiens was to become an important concentration point for the British Expeditionary Force. Many Union Jacks were now displayed in the streets, and Paris was a city of bunting.

The stranded American tourists were treated as if they belonged to another world. They stood outside the conflict while we British and French were fighting side by side against the menace of barbarism. We were too busy to bother much about the disconsolate Americans, whose chief preoccupation at the moment was besieging the United States Embassy and the overworked American Consular officers in their desire to get home. The folk in America were evidently getting anxious about their relatives. In the papers appeared lists of names of American citizens about whom information was sought.

With the passing of each day women began to take the place of men. Before long they appeared as tram conductors and as ticket collectors on the "Metro." The authorities would evidently not be caught napping. In the unlikely event of a siege, Paris would be prepared. The race courses of Longchamp and Auteuil were turned into grazing grounds for cattle. A reminder that there were still enemies in our midst was the passing through the streets of a thousand German and Austrian civilian prisoners, escorted by troops with fixed bayonets, to be entrained for a concentration camp. The French and British newspaper correspondents were beginning to chafe, and I heard of their woes from my friends, Hamilton

Fyfe, George Adam and Ward Price. They were told by the French Ministry of War that, as the whole campaign was being carried on in secrecy, they would not be allowed to go anywhere near the front at present !

Hotel Louvois, Paris,  
Thursday, 6 August.

After being at the office, when I was rather tired, I went for half an hour to a cinema to see the pictures of Monsieur Poincaré's visit to Russia.

All day long special one-sheet editions of the French papers are brought out and are sold by boys who rush along the streets. I must have bought about twelve or fifteen to try and get the latest news, though most of them are merely extracts from the morning's edition of the Paris Daily Mail. I may be going over to London to-morrow to give Northcliffe a report of the situation here. (*Letter.*)

Friday, 7 August.

I only made up my mind finally about going across to London at 4 o'clock and caught the only train out of Paris at 6.44 p.m. We got to Boulogne at a quarter to six: the journey from Paris took eleven hours. I had to change at Amiens and as far as that we were eight or nine in a carriage. Many of my fellow passengers were Belgian soldiers going to the Front. At Amiens there were only seats in a second-class and we were packed like sardines side by side.

Just opposite me in the carriage were a French couple making love. She was attractive and dark and sat on his knee; they went very far! I suppose they felt that ordinary restraints did not count in war time. Then another Frenchwoman, who was a friend of the one opposite, talked of her husband being at the front; I think she must have been a "lady of easy virtue." Like all of us in the carriage I suppose she was tired and she suddenly placed her head on my shoulder and kept it there for two hours! She tried to get me to embrace her, but she must have found me a rather dull travelling companion. When she saw she had no effect on me she just went to sleep and I couldn't move, as there was a man touching me on the other side. (*Letter.*)

Travelling in France was very uncomfortable. The train crawled along at fifteen miles an hour. Food was difficult to obtain, and one never knew when one would

arrive at one's destination. We passed many troop trains going to the Flanders front. Naturally, the civilian passengers made no complaint. Everything must give way to the military. Officialdom was now in complete control and the passenger was introduced to many irksome, if necessary, restrictions and formalities. Endless hours were spent in dismal and draughty embarkation sheds on both sides of the Channel. There was a never-ending stamping of permits and passports. Visas and vexations were suffered patiently. *Laissez-passers* and *permis de séjour* were the order of the day. We were in the clutches of the military machine. For the most part the officials were civil, if peremptory. There was, however, one little khaki-dressed whippersnapper in the British passport control somewhere in France who became notorious. His conception of serving his King and country was to make himself as offensive as he could to all that passed his way. The more philosophic shrugged their shoulders and bore his importunities—*C'est la guerre*.

From London I heard of scenes at the railway stations similar to those I had been witnessing in Paris :—

London,  
Thursday, 6 August.

I saw Victor\* off at Waterloo by the 5.50. Things were in a state of great confusion. The station was packed and there were such harrowing scenes on all sides. A train crowded with troops went out while we waited. Women with poor tortured faces, most of them crying in a harrowing way, stood watching it go. One poor woman was beside herself and stretched her arms out after it, crying "Oh, George, George, come back," and so many of them will never come back.

This will be such an opportunity for you to stir up the Overseas members. What splendid messages have come from Australia and New Zealand this morning.

\* Major Victor Brooke, 9th Lancers, my cousin. He died on the retreat from Mons and was my first near relative to pay the price. He was a fine soldier, had exceptional charm and extraordinary powers of application, and if he had been spared would have gone far in his profession.

Back in London, I wrote on

Friday, 7 August.

We arrived at Folkestone after 8 and were kept standing on deck to be passed by Government officials for 2½ hours. We ultimately left at a quarter to twelve, and I slept in the train, waking up to see the road to Westerham. We got to London after two—22 hours from Paris. Before I forget it, the last news of the family was contained in this wire which I got on Sunday, 2 August: "Unable to travel, remaining here Bad Nauheim, all well, Father."\* I do so hope they are comfortable and not worrying. There are no communications going through to Germany, so I don't think there is anything I can do. (*Letter.*)

Elmwood, St. Peters, Kent,  
Saturday, 8 August.

I am down here with Northcliffe at Broadstairs, and expect to return to Paris on Monday. I have just been reading one of my books. I love these words, but I wish I could feel that our heads were going to wear sunbeams and our feet touch stars:

"Fight well, and thou shalt see  
After these wars, thy head wear sunbeams  
And thy feet touch stars."

I am to have a talk with Northcliffe this morning and he wants me to return to Paris. I went to the Foreign Office yesterday to get a new passport and then to the Overseas Club office. I lunched at the Marlborough, it was full and there were quite a lot of officers in uniform.

One young man, with his hair brushed back, and looking the typical "young man about town" was sitting next to me, and I heard him say that he had been up till 4 a.m. swearing in recruits, and probably he will do splendid work. (*Letter.*)

Back in Paris. Hotel Louvois,  
Monday, 10 August.

Yesterday morning at Elmwood I saw Northcliffe alone for half an hour at 9 a.m. F. W. Wile, the *Daily Mail* correspondent at Berlin, who is an American, was there. He said there was a regular frenzy against Great Britain. First of all the people refused to believe that we had come in, as they had been told we would remain neutral. Outside the British Embassy huge mobs had been shouting "Treacherous England"—"Death to the

\* My father, mother and sister, Winifride, were detained by the German authorities at Bad Nauheim. (See Chapter VII.)

traitors." Northcliffe was very friendly, but wants me to stay in Paris during the war. What I intend doing is to stay here in Paris for the rest of August, which will show him that it is not a question of shirking responsibility, and then telling him quite frankly that I am not prepared to go on staying here indefinitely, and that by the rearrangements in the staff that I have made they will be able to look after things quite well.

He said it will be such an interesting experience, but, of course, I am determined to do my Overseas Club work. I feel no enthusiasm for my work here, none. But in a kind of way I feel it is my duty to him after what he has done, and it really is the hardest thing I could be asked to do. I have arranged for my Overseas correspondence to be forwarded here, and two big bundles have just come, so that will make things easier. I shall be able to feel I am really keeping the threads in my hands.

Northcliffe sent me in his large car to Folkestone. The boat left at 11.30. We got to Boulogne about one. There was a long delay about passports, and the train left just as I was walking to the town station. Wasn't it annoying? The trains are not being run in connection with the boats. The next train did not leave till 7.15 p.m., so I spent the afternoon with George Curnock, the *Daily Mail* man here, and with George Adam, the *Times* Paris Correspondent, who was also at Boulogne.

We lunched at an hotel and then went for an hour's spin by car and we invited rather a pretty American woman, who was stranded here and who is separated from her husband, to join us. She was rushing back to Paris to see the man she cares for before he left for the Front.

We had to change trains at Amiens and arrived at Paris at 5.30 in the morning, a ten-hour journey from Boulogne! There were no cabs, so my two friends—one of them is the Manager of Perrier Water, Willie Todd, who gave me £10 10s. for the O.S. Club a month ago—and I put our things on a dray and were driven along like that. It took us about an hour to get to the hotel. (*Letter.*)

Stirring things were happening in France. The official accounts of the landing of the British Expeditionary Force were published, and there was good news from the Front. I returned to find a wave of optimism sweeping all before it. Ten days later it had turned to the deepest pessimism. On 10 August the news that Alsace had been occupied by French troops caused great enthusiasm. No other war objective from the French standpoint

compared with the regaining of Alsace. The dream of forty years seemed about to be realised. There were long accounts of "how the French entered Alsace." The proclamation by Marshal Joffre was posted up: "Children of Alsace! After forty-four years of sorrowful waiting French soldiers once more tread the ground of your noble country!" At Boulogne the aged Empress Eugénie gave voice to the national feelings: "At last, we have waited for it so long!" After all these years of waiting Alsace was to see the red trousers again. Wreaths of flowers were placed at the foot of the Strasbourg monument in the Place de la Concorde.

Despite all that was happening on the various fronts Paris was becoming more normal. There were more horse cabs in the streets. A week after the outbreak of war the children were playing happily in the Champs Elysées. It was difficult to realise that we were at war. Pending the return of the motor buses a service of horse charabancs had been started in some of the main boulevards. Owing to the lack of transport, thousands bicycled to their work. By 12 August people were going about their business as usual, although there was still a note of anxiety evident. The "battle of millions" was said to be beginning, but the war news from the French front was meagre. The work of relaying the Avenue du Bois de Boulogne was being proceeded with, so that, as the Press informed us, "this magnificent avenue will be ready for the triumphant procession, when the invaders have been driven back and the war is over." Voluntary work for supplying the troops with necessities was quickly organised, but I noticed this placard pasted up: "Do not let these rich, well-to-do women make the bandages and bed-jackets, doctor's overalls and sheets, required for medical work. Let them pay poor women to do this, women who need feeding."

However glowing the newspaper accounts of French victories might be, there were always black-dressed crowds of women in the churches praying for the safe

return of their husbands and sons. I saw many anxious faces gazing in suppliant adoration before the shrines of Our Lady, and many candles placed with reverent hands before the lighted altars of saints and martyrs.

Paris,

Wednesday, 12 August.

At moments I get feelings that I ought to volunteer for active service, but in my calm moments I know that my one duty is to my Overseas work which is going to go through its testing time.\* I would like to get some organising work in London which would enable me to look after the Overseas Club as well, but owing to the fact that Northcliffe wants me to remain in Paris I feel I must stay here for the time being. I am dining with Hamilton Fyfe† and Ward Price to-night, both are special correspondents of the *Daily Mail*, and I enjoy being with them. There is no question of the *Paris Daily Mail* moving to Geneva now.

Paris,

Thursday, 13 August.

You will see Hamilton Fyfe's and Ward Price's telegrams in the *Daily Mail* each day. There has been no war news of any importance for two days and we are all waiting. I think the French and ourselves are going to have our work more than cut out and I should not be a bit surprised to see the Germans in Brussels.‡

Paris,

14 August.

I am dining with Fyfe and several of the other war correspondents, one of them is just back from Amiens, where he saw a large number of English troops. Sir John French is passing through Paris to-morrow. I am trying to get word through to mother and father via the American Embassies in Berlin and Paris, but I do not know if I shall succeed.

Paris,

Saturday, 15 August.

I lunched with Fyfe, Ward Price and two other journalists. Just before lunch I went with Fyfe to the Gare du Nord to see Sir John French and his staff arrive. Sir Francis Bertie, British

\* See page 99.

† Hamilton Fyfe has been an intimate and valued friend since Carmelite House days. He is an out and out idealist and spends his life in helping forward the causes he believes in.

‡ The Germans entered Brussels on 20 August.



Ambassador, was there, whom I first met with Lady Warwick five or six years ago. He presented French to the various Ministers, Generals and high officials. French blushed just like a schoolboy. He looked very trim in his khaki and red tabs. There was a round of cheering from the crowd when he appeared. In the afternoon we went for a nine-mile walk right through the Bois. I have just heard from father from Germany via Holland, dated 7 August. They are all well, which is a great relief.

Last night as I was walking home I saw an officer going for a drive in an open horse-cab with the woman he loved. I suppose he was just leaving for the Front. I felt so sad watching them, as I understood what they were feeling. She was feeling the outlines of his face as if to remember them, they kissed in a very real way—poor things.

It is so curious in a moment of crisis like this to be obliged to do work with which one is out of sympathy and yet under it all there is my enthusiasm bottled up, and when I am depressed, and that is often nowadays, I wonder whether I shall ever get an outlet. There is all my Overseas work waiting to be done in London—helping to organise Empire sentiment. I would not mind staying here if there was some real object in my doing so. Of course, all the others on the staff are in the same boat, but then perhaps they have not known what it is to do work one really cares for, like I did during my Empire tour, and that one feels is really worth while. It is such a contrast.

Now to tell you a nice story about one of the staff. Barrow, who is in charge of our Travel Bureau, and is an American and a very nice fellow, was at the hairdresser's being shaved yesterday, when a pretty girl about 22 came in crying and let down her hair, which was long, and asked the barber what he would give for it. The man said times were bad and he couldn't give her more than the equivalent of twenty shillings, so Barrow there and then gave her a sum equal to ten shillings, and told her she mustn't in any circumstances have it cut off. Apparently she wanted the money to buy newspapers containing war news, and then try and make a little money by selling them. I wish I knew what had happened to her. Wasn't it nice of him? (*Letters.*)

Like a breath of fresh air came this letter from an old-world garden in England, far from the war area :—

Friday, 14 August.

The weather is lovely these days, hot but with a delicious little wind blowing, and I sit in a chair in a favourite corner in the garden, a square bit enclosed on three sides by old rose-coloured

walls and planted in mauve and pink; so lovely. In the middle there is an old sundial with heliotrope climbing up on it, and I am here in peace and quietness with my feet on green grass—I think of you and your rush in Paris. I hear nothing but birds and cooing pigeons and the soothing hum of the mowing machine and move in a world of trees and flowers, and you are hemmed in by rows of houses and breathe exhausted air and hear newspaper boys crying out war news.

Hotel Louvois, Paris,  
Monday, 16 August.

I breakfast downstairs at 9.30 now, as I do my own Overseas work for an hour or two before breakfast; there were no rolls but dull big loaves. We have to eat the big loaves by military decree as small bread is wasteful. There are no waiters. I am lunching with George Adam, the *Times* correspondent. Of course, no one has any idea how long the war will last, the Chief thinks a long time. We have been warned not to be surprised if we hear heavy artillery coming from the North-East. (*Letter.*)

I sometimes wonder if the various newspaper strategists in all countries, who had to write on the war, have ever looked back on their prophecies. One of the best informed journalists in London wrote on 20 August: "Antwerp is one of the strongest fortresses in the world. To carry it by siege would take as long as it did to carry Port Arthur." And again, "All that we can say definitely about the war at the present moment, is that the Allies have hitherto done all they wanted to do." Certainly in Paris in these mid-August days things seemed to be going according to plan. The Press was doing its duty and keeping our spirits up. We accepted without question what we read. We were optimists. This is the fare that was provided for us by the allied papers: "Blow to Germany by land and sea," "German troops defeated by Belgians," "Twenty-five German ships captured," "Germans driven back from Liège with great loss," "Superb Belgian heroism," "Retreat of Germans from Liège," "German losses 25,000," "Allies advancing on Germans," "German Peril in Liège"—though we had never been told how the Germans got to Liège—"German

retreat cut off by the French," "Russian invasion of Austria." By 17 August all the news seemed to be good: "The French Striking," "Germans flung back," "French advance in Lorraine," "Seventy miles of successes," "Week's steady advance of French lines," "Berlin hearing the truth," "Dismay in Vienna," "Heavy Austrian defeat." The newspaper-reading public was certainly justified in its optimism, but I was frankly puzzled as to why the German military machine, after its forty years' preparation, was not achieving more spectacular results. I recalled the war book I had read at my private school—in 1895, I think—which had described the invasion of England by Germany's grey-clad hordes, and how they swept down on London's defences and fought a great battle in Surrey. That book had first aroused my interest in the German military machine.

About 21 August there was a change of tone in the French Press. The German occupation of Brussels was announced, and on the following day the French withdrawal in Lorraine was dispatched in a few lines of small type. To raise our drooping spirits came the news of Japan's declaration of war on Germany and a great Russian victory over Austria. Apparently the Russian steam roller was at last getting going. The Russians might be slow starters, but once they began to move there would be no stopping them. Even if things were not going as we had hoped in Flanders, great things were happening in the world. A new era in the treatment of subject peoples was dawning. The news from Ireland was almost unbelievable. I thought of Boer war days in Dublin, and now I read that John Redmond had been as good as his word. He had been repeating in Queen's County what he had said in the House of Commons. North and South, Catholics and Protestants, Cromwellians and Celts, would stand shoulder to shoulder to preserve peace and order in Ireland and defend her shores against a foreign foe. Great Britain

would have to treat Ireland as an equal partner in future; there would have to be some form of Anglo-Irish alliance.

Imperial Russia was also learning its lesson. No more crushing of Polish patriots. The Tsar issued a proclamation—although it was signed by the Grand Duke Nicholas, the Russian Commander-in-Chief—promising autonomy and the restoration to Poland of territory annexed by the Powers. "People of Poland, the hour has struck for the realisation of the sacred dream of your ancestors." Comment in the Polish colony in Paris was cautious, but Madame Curie, the co-discoverer of radium, said she thought "the Russian manifesto was the first step towards the unity of Poland and reconciliation with Russia." Paris inspected with interest its first war trophy, the flag of the 132nd Bavarian Infantry, captured at Sainte Blaise, displayed from the first-floor window of the Ministry of War.

Hotel Louvois,  
Wednesday, 19 August.

Last night after dinner I went out to see the moving pictures of the troops, they were quite good. All the theatres are shut, of course, and so is the place where I used to go and listen to gramophone records. It was interesting hearing about the British Army from the *Times* Correspondent. He was up at the Front yesterday. I am going there by motor to-morrow to see if we can make arrangements for the supply of newspapers to our troops. Things are getting much more normal and flowers for sale are reappearing at the flower stands, although the men flower-sellers have been called up. The sale of absinthe has been forbidden in the cafés. I think I have only tasted it once, and I hated it. (*Letter.*)

The French War Office, when it had no special news to give out, issued extracts from letters and diaries found on dead German soldiers. The upshot of these letters was that the Germans, who had started in high spirits, were gradually being disillusioned. I saw no German papers at this time. Occasionally I saw a Swiss or an American paper. I forget the actual moment when, as

a result of reading neutral and subsequently German papers when I returned to London, it began to dawn on me that the war looked entirely different as seen through German or Austrian eyes. I was face to face with a new factor—war propaganda. I have often recalled since this the words of Brandes, the Dane, "War means the assassination of truth." In the twentieth century, an important part of the Government's task is to keep up the spirits of its citizens. In order to do so, it rewrote current events in accordance with high policy. Subsequently I was destined to play an active part in presenting the British case to the Empire overseas and the people of the United States.

During my last week in Paris—I left on 23 August—our spirits were cheered by the announcement that the Germans were in full retreat towards the Rhine. I also heard for the first time the song "It's a long way to Tipperary." There was now a daily trickle of stranded British tourists, British governesses, teachers of languages and others who were returning from Switzerland. The new time-table for the Paris-London passenger service was announced. The train left the Gare St. Lazare daily at 8.0, the steamer left Dieppe at 1.0 and arrived at Folkestone at 5.0, and London was reached at 8.0. The newspapers now began to publish war pictures. We were informed for the first time that special steps were being taken by the authorities to protect art treasures from the danger of bombing from the air. The Venus de Milo and the Winged Victory were placed in safety behind walls of steel.

Hotel Louvois, Paris,

Friday morning, 21 August.

Yesterday, the 20th, B. and I went in a large closed car to Amiens, which is about a hundred miles by road. The country was looking beautiful, and all the wheat was cut and in stooks. It was such a lovely day with freshness in the air that it made one's blood tingle. B. was a sympathetic person to be with. At Amiens, which is the Base of the British Army, I had to see various officers in connection with the problem of selling the *Daily Mail*.

They were friendly, and anxious for the men to get regular supplies of papers. We also saw numbers of Tommies in the streets, they gave me quite a thrill. (*Letter.*)

To be British at this time was the key to French hearts. Probably never before nor since has Great Britain been so popular in France. The British Expeditionary Force was just setting out to play that vital part in the great events which led up to the retreat from Mons, the Battles of the Marne and the Aisne. Enthusiastic utterances of Frenchmen were printed each day in the *Paris Daily Mail*. Readers were cheered by anecdotes such as this : " A French officer seized the hand of a British war correspondent and said ' After this we are friends for ever. Oh, it is splendid.' "

My last letter from Paris in August stated :—

Sunday, 23 August.

I was up by four and got down to the Gare du Nord by 5.30. There were terrific crowds, the worst I have ever seen travelling. Americans mostly fleeing from the Continent. The train was packed, and we took turns in sitting on our baggage in the corridor. We went by Arras quite close to the Belgian frontier, and saw British troops. We got to London at 7.0, which is much quicker than last time.

Monday, 24 August. Back in London.

It is so marvellous being back at the Overseas Club and doing my own real work.

25 August.

I lunched with Northcliffe. The meeting about the *Paris Daily Mail* was held and various matters were fixed up and I have now arranged only to go over to Paris once a month. He still does not understand that my heart is not in the newspaper business. Anyhow, he was very pleased with my work in Paris.

26 August

I was with Northcliffe again this afternoon, and I think he at last realises that I don't want to go back to Paris and I think it will now be easier for me in that respect.

Thursday, 27 August.

I think I have fixed up about not going to Paris. I saw Northcliffe this afternoon and I think he is going to put Barrow in charge of the *Paris Mail* largely on my recommendation. I am trying very

hard to get Northcliffe to take up a big recruiting scheme. My new secretary, Chaplin, was with me for the first time to-day, which made things much easier.

I fear the British Forces have suffered terribly. I do wish Northcliffe would take up the recruiting scheme.

Friday, 28 August.

I have just been to the Palace music hall with Lady Rodd\*. When we were there the news of the naval victory was read out, and it made me so happy.

I have met several people who say that the Russian troops have landed in the North, and they talk about it very convincingly. Troop trains of Russians with the blinds drawn down have been seen at Grantham station.

London,

29 August.

I think there is no question that the British Expeditionary Force has suffered terrible losses and it soon may be a question of enrolling every man available. I would not be a bit surprised to see the Germans get through to Paris.

Monday, 31 August.

I lunched with Rothermere. It is quite definite that I am not going back to Paris now. I cannot get any satisfaction from Northcliffe about the recruiting scheme, so I am going ahead on my own lines with my various Empire schemes and funds for the troops.

Sunday, 6 September.

I went up to Hampstead Heath along that top road where one looks out across to St. Paul's. The sun was shining and the children and dogs were paddling in the pond. Everyone looked happy and I could not believe that there could be such a thing as death. (*Letters.*)

Even after I left Paris I kept in close touch with conditions there, and until 1916, as a Director of the *Paris Daily Mail*, I paid frequent visits to Paris for Northcliffe. I always stayed away for as few days as possible because I was then immersed in my overseas war work. During the last week in August the optimism of the middle of the month had entirely gone. Paris was facing the darkest days of the war. Refugees were pouring in from

\* Now Lady Rennell of Rodd.

the North. The precincts of the Gare du Nord were crowded with refugee mothers and children from the invaded territories. There were grave fears that Paris would be captured. The French Government moved to Bordeaux, and the *Paris Daily Mail* followed suit. The Press Bureau published lists of atrocities, vouched for by the Belgian Committee of Inquiry, committed by the German invaders in Belgium. There were rumours, despite the hitherto optimistic statements about the Russian steam-roller, that the Germans had won a great victory on the eastern front.

A few days after I returned to London, Lord Kitchener made a speech in the House of Lords, when he announced the employment of Indian troops in France, "high-souled men of first-rate training, representing an ancient civilisation." On 30 August a returned neutral traveller from Germany wrote :

During my month's enforced residence, I have read repeated reports of revolution in Paris, of the assassination of President Poincaré, of civil strife in England, of return to middle-ages barbarity in Russia, of incredible atrocities by the Belgian civil population. Revolution was said to be rife in London, Paris and St. Petersburg. Enthusiastic Germans—and they were all enthusiastic in those days—said, "We shall be in Paris within three weeks. The war will be over in two months."

Great scenes of enthusiasm were witnessed in Paris, when the British volunteers, enrolled from among the British community in Paris, departed from the Gare St. Lazare. The British correspondent who saw them off wrote :

Maybe these volunteers will never get out to the firing line. They have gone to Rouen for training. The Germans may be broken before they are ready for the field. Many of the corridors in the train were placarded with the words "Excursion to Berlin."

On 30 August German airmen were dropping bombs and leaflets on Paris. The Germans announced that the German Army was at the gates of Paris, and that there was nothing left for the city to do but to surrender.



## Chapter VII

### A WAR DIARY IN GERMANY

2 AUGUST—25 OCTOBER, 1914

*This chapter contains a diary-letter to her three sisters written by my mother from day to day. She and my father were "detained" at Bad Nauheim, Germany, from the outbreak of war to 3 October. My sister Winifride was permitted to leave Germany on 25 September. My mother died on 14 May, 1935. She was happy to think that her war diary was to appear in this book.*

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## Chapter VII

### A WAR DIARY IN GERMANY

FOR several years my father, who suffered from his heart, and my mother, also an invalid, went regularly in the summer to Bad Nauheim near Frankfurt. My sister had left England on 28 July, 1914, to join our parents.

On the journey I heard the first murmurs of the coming storm—my compartment was full of German and Austrian women, and the German guard who came to clip our tickets at the frontier, seeing one for Vienna, remarked, "They seem to be going mad there." (My sister's account.)

My projected visit to Germany was postponed on Thursday 30 July,\* and it was not till 9 August that I received word in Paris that my family had to remain at Nauheim for the time being. If they were to be confined in an enemy country they could not have been more fortunately placed. Nauheim largely depended for its prosperity on British, American and Russian *kurgäster*. The inhabitants would make themselves as pleasant to the stranded British as the circumstances permitted. After making many vain attempts to get news to my parents I finally resorted to sending frequent postcards, written in legible handwriting in German, which I sent to a friend of my father's, a General in the Dutch Army. These messages after long delays arrived at their destination.

Nauheim is delightfully situated on the outskirts of the Taunus region—undulating countryside with forests, out of which timid roe-deer occasionally appear. The country was well cultivated by a hard-working peasantry. During the war I used to think of the madhouse world

\* See page 38.

we lived in, which set tillers of the soil from France, Germany, Austria, Russia and Italy at each other's throats. My last pre-war visit to Germany had been in August, 1912. I had many heated arguments with Dr. Schott, my father's physician, and other German friends. Dr. Schott was a Jew but an ardent believer in Germany's right to a larger place in the sun. The average German point of view might thus be summarised :

Is it reasonable that all the best oversea territories in the world should be divided between two or three European nations? Especially when several of the colony-owning nations have passed their zenith. Why should countries like Portugal have rich possessions in Africa? And why should degenerate France—whose efficiency cannot be compared to that of virile Nordic Germany, the future leader of Europe and the world—be allowed to keep her vast colonial possessions, from which she excludes other nations? Great Britain is too sport-loving and her star is on the wane."

In an account written at the time, my sister speaks repeatedly of the nervousness of her German friends during the week-end August 1-4 as to Great Britain's intentions. Despite assurances to the contrary, disquieting rumours were circulating that Great Britain might take the field against the Fatherland. To reassure themselves German friends said : "The British will never join hands with those Slav barbarians the Russians. We Germans and British belong to a superior racial order." My sister, in an account of the German reaction to Great Britain's declaration of war, wrote :

As I came down to breakfast on 5 August, I saw a German, long resident in London, turn pale, and heard him exclaim, "*Ach, Gott im Himmel! das schlimmste ist geschehen*" ("God in Heaven, the worst has happened!") He knew, as every German in his heart knew, though he would not admit it, that their plans, so marvellously and so minutely thought out, had, at the very start, been foiled.

As I re-read the letters and journals written by my mother I have been transported back to the Germany I used to know so well as a boy. I can hear the tramp,

tramp of those well-disciplined soldiers marching along the dusty roads during manœuvres and the rattle of the chains on the horse-drawn gun carriages and field kitchens. When the war broke out I could picture Germany's whole organising genius concentrated in massing millions of men in field grey on her frontiers. I seemed to hear the constant rumble of long troop trains as they crossed the Rhine bridges at Cologne and Coblenz, ever westwards. Would these troop trains never stop coming? There must be an end some time to German man-power.

The following extracts from the diary-letter kept by my mother during August, September and October, 1914, was of course never intended for publication. She started keeping it as a letter to her three sisters, to be posted when opportunity occurred. Having started it she made daily entries. Apart from minor literary corrections I have not altered it; in no case have I changed the sense.

Hotel Prince of Wales,  
Bad Nauheim, Germany,  
Sunday, 2 August, 1914.

My darling Sisters,\*

You can't realize the war excitement and how it develops hourly. The wildest rumours come in, and unfortunately F.† believes them all, and tears about from one person to another, the story growing as each person adds a little fuel to the fire! Numbers of people are rushing off in the wildest way, and probably can't leave after all, as the station and the lines are blocked with the troops going off.

The Austrians went off a week ago, 800 Russians left last week, and the German reservists are now leaving for their Regiments, but among the visitors the panic is incredible. This morning F. came in to say that the Government here had ordered all foreigners to leave, on account of the food supply running short, and we must go at once. I scarcely credited it, and now the Hotel Manager says that he asked officially, and *the statement is absolutely false*. It would be almost impossible to get away now, and if people

\* Lady Brooke (St. Jean de Luz, France), Mrs. Yeats-Brown (Portofino, near Genoa), and Mrs. R. Smythe (Killiney, Co. Dublin).

† In this diary F. is my father and W. my sister Winifride.

do, it is at their own risk; if the order does come the press of sending the troops will be over, and the Government will provide trains to take us.

Last Friday all the people in the streets kept singing the National Anthem and cheering tremendously, and then singing the Austrian Anthem, which has the same tune as the hymn "Praise the Lord, ye Heavens adore him." Till about 12 last night they were singing past our windows in rather a disconnected way, which sounded as if they had "drink taken." This does not conduce to good sleeping. That nice young Mr. Ingoldsby Smythe of Barbervilla in Ireland (grandson of the murdered woman) is staying at the Grand Hotel where Mr. George Edwardes the theatrical producer is also staying. Poor Mr. S. had to leave the army about a year ago owing to his heart.

W. has just come in from Church, she was stopped posting a letter to E. and told only an open post card in German, and in German characters, would be allowed through. I hadn't realised that Germany would practically starve if this panic goes on long, but Mrs. Autor (the Manager's wife) explained that they get their vegetables from France and their flour from Russia, already the price of flour is up and when that is finished they will use rice (most of which comes via England). Everyone in Nauheim is full of the tremendous loss to the place the curtailment of the season will mean. I don't know what we shall do but as this can't go now, some day you will get it I suppose.

2 August, Sunday Evening, 7 o'clock. If you ever get this, it will be very stale news! After constant and varied reports, at last we were authentically told that we must leave to-day or to-morrow, as after that no trains could be guaranteed. So we settled to go at 12 to-morrow, but on meeting Cook's man, he strongly advised F. to leave at six in the morning, so we then decided to follow his advice, but we were told we could not take any luggage except hand things!! So S.\* has been hard at work, stowing away things into our trunks to leave at this hotel. There was not a spot to sit down, when Herr Autor knocked to say, "You need not pack as you can't go!!" We wired in German to tell E., and the great bother is that we can't write or receive letters or papers!! and the German papers tell so little. I fear it all looks bad. Eleven million Germans are being mobilised, a scale never reached before.

Sunday, 2 August, 10.30 p.m. Just as S. was finishing putting

\* S. was my Mother's maid and companion, Miss Sara Carruthers. She and her sister Miss Maggie Carruthers were with my mother for forty years and are dear friends of the family. They returned to Ireland on the death of my mother, May, 1935.

back the things in the drawers Cook's man came down to say we could go at 6 in the morning after all and he thought we could get as far as Cologne. So she began again to divide everything, and put the few things we can take in the small hand-bag and hold-all for herself and me, and she is now finishing the trunks, all of which we must leave behind here.

I wonder when we shall see our big baggage again, and what will become of us ; it is all very uncomfortable and I dread to think of what the journey will mean. Oh ! if only I could run about as I used to do, I would not be such a drag on everybody !\*

*Monday, 3 August, 10 a.m.* Well ! we were up at 5, had coffee at 6, and got to the station in good time, leaving our luggage and keys with Herr Autor. My bath-chair was on the platform, just opposite where my carriage was to stop, when W. came up and said " We can't go ! ! " A friend had kindly come to tell us we could not get beyond Cologne, where almost everyone was held up. So we and several others thought it better to be detained in this quiet place than at Cologne, where all would be so crowded, and so back we came ! !

My poor bath-chair man cried as he was pushing me when I talked of the war. He said " Young people think war is a fine thing, but when you are older, you see things differently, and I must go soon and leave my wife and five children."

We would give a good deal to get letters or even English papers but all are stopped. We feel like Jos Sedley in " Vanity Fair " at Brussels when the battle of Waterloo was fought. Most of the carriage horses and motors are " commandeered," and all food has gone up in price. The news in the *Frankfurter Zeitung* is very grave this morning and it is nearly certain that France must join in !

*Tuesday, 4 August.* I ended up yesterday's diary when we had just returned from the railway station. Fifteen of the British cure-guests from this Hotel went to the station intending to go but only two men eventually faced it (Mr. Dallin the Egyptian Finance man, and Mr. Talbot, a cousin of the Shrewsburys). The hotel people were not in the least astonished to see us back ; it was then not 8 in the morning.

I felt to take our luncheon (which we had already done up for the train) out to the woods would be much more resting than staying indoors in the Hotel, amid the " strife of tongues." So we went. F. had gone off with a party of Americans in a motor (which is commandeered to-day) to Frankfurt to see the British and American Consuls and try and get passports ; they were back

\* My mother had been a complete invalid for many years ; see *Uphill*, page 110.

at 6. Friedberg (where the Czarina was born), a quiet sleepy village, was bristling with soldiers, and 1,000 horses from the neighbourhood picketed in an enclosure ready to go off.

F.'s party was stopped 8 times by armed soldiers. If the chauffeur did not pull up quick enough, a loaded rifle was pointed at him and everything was searched, even the tool box and the cushions! The poor Consuls were nearly driven wild by everyone clamouring for help. Our party got their passports which is a good thing.

If only we could get our letters, we could be happy; but nothing in English is allowed to come through, and we miss our well-informed English papers terribly, the last we saw being Friday's *Times* (31st). Thank God W. is here and E. had not started.

A Russian doctor at Giessen (about 10 miles off) who lived and practised here for several years, was found putting cholera germs into drinking water, and immediately shot; a Russian in this town found with a bomb yesterday was shot also, so the authorities are determined to act drastically and two Russian spies, disguised as Hospital Nurses here, have been summarily dealt with. There is a Roumanian woman in this Hotel, who has been suspected of spying for some days, and she is to be "politely" escorted away to-day.

From 5 this morning hundreds of motors passed on their way to Headquarters; this town is to be a Hospital Dépôt for the wounded, and F. and W. went this morning to see Frau von Frankenbergh, the nice wife of the Head Direktor of this place, to ask how we could help, by rolling bandages, etc., it would make us happier to be doing something. They are very short-handed in the Hotel, but are getting in the wives and sisters of the men who have gone.

*Wednesday, 5 August.* We were all very tired after all the mental excitement we have been going through, and got to bed in good time, but this morning all has changed, from an early hour motors were still going. Then came the clatter, clatter of many horses in threes, a man riding one and leading two, and the German National Anthem was sung and played, and there was great cheering as more troops went off. I fancy the troops (on purpose) are made to sing a good deal to keep up their spirits, those who are left behind join in, and forget for the moment their sorrows.

When Sara came in from her breakfast, she said "The Head waiter tells me that England declared war at 7 last evening." The Germans are evidently much upset, and we have been warned not to be out alone and not to go near the station and to be in at 9. No English cheques will be taken in the Hotel, and they are beginning to be careful about food. We wired last evening to Sir Arthur Nicolson and to Sir E. Goschen, in the name of the

English and the Americans, asking for a train for all to go together, and signed by F. as a Privy Councillor, and Mr. Yerburgh, who is M.P. for Chester. The fact of England's being involved accounts for the Kaiser's official wire yesterday afternoon, of a promise of protection to all foreigners. The money difficulty is an anxiety, but of course Germany will be glad to get us away as soon as possible, owing to the food difficulty. For some days they would not take English gold.

*Thursday, 6 August.* The Germans all look much subdued. W. and Miss Guinness walked in the afternoon to Friedberg and no difficulties were made. The Italian waiters here are leaving early to-morrow, and the food and service has been reduced. Mr. Yerburgh wired to Prince Rupprecht of Bavaria (who stopped with them for King George's Coronation) to ask for his help. A wire in reply came from him, saying he would do what he could. F. also wired to Prince Henry of Prussia, but no answer so far. It amuses us to see Americans who stated they were British subjects on Tuesday, on Wednesday finding England is unpopular, wearing little American flags!!

The garbled account of England's action in the German papers is painful reading, it is said that England has been longing for war with them for ages, and has now seized upon the Belgian question as a pretext. We so long to know the truth. One good thing this war fever has done already in Germany, is that it has united Socialists and all parties in one bond for the Fatherland. One's heart beats fast at so constantly hearing the tune of "God Save the King" being played.\*

*Friday, 7 August.* The Italian waiters left yesterday, and two of the housemaids with the head waiter do the upstairs work, and we have our meals at two long tables. As we can't be out on the balcony it is very close and hot and so noisy. We tried to open the windows but they were promptly shut!

The evening paper (German) says Lord Kitchener has been appointed War Minister, but it is almost impossible to get any real news, and the abuse of England and Sir E. Grey is sad reading.

*Saturday, 8 August.* We went to the Police Station in the afternoon to have our passports checked. When we came in we found Prince Henry of Prussia's answer to F's telegram saying merely, "*Bedaure nichts zu thun. Krieg ist Krieg, wir haben es nicht gewollt.*" (Regret nothing to be done. War is War—we did not wish for it.) *Prinz Heinrich.*" Also an official came to search our rooms and

\* The German National Anthem had the same tune as ours.



persons, he was quite pleasant, and hoped we were not afraid. I felt much more inclined to laugh.

There was cheering all the morning from the station as the troops passed in the trains. The German papers report the capture of Liège.

*Sunday, 9 August.* When we came in about 6.30, to our great delight and amazement, we found *The Times*, and the *Irish Times*, and some letters!!! Fortunately we are in this Hotel (Prince of Wales) with such nice people as Herr and Frau Autor, they could not be kinder in every way, and having been so many years in England they speak English well, and though strong for the Fatherland, take a just view of the situation. One of our letters was from E. to F. (typed) also of the 1st Aug., saying that if war broke out Lord Northcliffe wanted him to go to Paris and remain there in control of the *Paris Daily Mail*. I wonder what he has done, and he so badly needs his holiday.

*Monday, 10 August.* In the afternoon to church, after tea at Müller's, and coming out Mrs. Neeld introduced a nice English-woman, who with her party (6) was turned out of Wiesbaden on Friday. They were driving from 10 in the morning till after 12 under guard, with a soldier on the box, and on the road their luggage was taken out and examined. At Friedberg they had a little trouble, but on the whole the officers were quite kind; none of the party could speak German, and they were faint and weak for want of food, only being allowed a cup of coffee and piece of dry bread all day, and not knowing where they were being brought to.

*Wednesday, 12 August.* The same sort of day of hopes and fears and rumours. To the Police Office to see if we could get any letters, but were told there were none, and we should get no more! A Dutch lady told us the news in a Dutch paper she had of the 6th. Of course our tea now is one portion for three and biscuits, as money is getting scarce.

*Saturday, 15 August.* A German official came and W. said she wished she could talk German as fluently as he did English. He quietly remarked, "You will all have to speak it soon." Ingoldsby Smythe joined us at tea and told us that the waiters at the "Grand" said they would be in Paris on the 28th and in London soon after!! The Italian and Dutch papers tell us far more than the German papers, which tell very little and are full of abuse of England! Here they know that England and America make Nauheim, and they keep civil, and I suppose hope for people to return next year! But—who can tell what will have happened then?

*Sunday, 16 August.* Mr. Ingoldsby Smythe came up to sit with me and told me his troubles, and how he was watched all last year and has been "shadowed" this year; he was kept two hours and a half at the Police station this morning and questioned, and finally brought back to the "Grand Hotel," being led by the arm by a policeman, though he has left the army for two years and is suffering from his heart.

*Tuesday, 18 August.* F. on the go all day, and W. and Miss Guinness and Mr. Cohen working hard, discovering which English people wish to go, as the idea is to charter a Rhine steamer to take us to Rotterdam. The long strain does tell on one, but strange to say not a single one of the *heart* people are suffering!!! I have been trembling for F., knowing all this excitement is the worst thing for him!! (Can it be that the hearts of all the invalids here are far better than they think they are, or than their doctors tell them they are?) At luncheon a wire to F. came from the American Ambassador at Berlin, saying *Ihre Verwandten wünschen Nachrichten Gerard*. (Your relations wish for news.) A letter from the American Consul at Frankfurt came, to say that we shall not be allowed to go by Rhine steamer and we can only leave by train and go to Copenhagen.

There was great excitement about a wire to the Town saying, Belfort has been taken by the Germans; but later this proved to be false. A Dutch lady tells us that the Crystal Palace, the Duke of Portland's house (Welbeck), and the Grand Duke Michael's place at Hampstead, have been turned into Hospitals for the wounded. The death of the Pope was only announced in a small corner of the German paper; as war news and abuse of England occupy nearly all the space.

Miss Guinness went to the room in the Bath House where the German women are working for the wounded; the English women had written to the Frau Bürgermeister ten days ago, saying how glad they would be to help, but had never even received an acknowledgment! However, that was probably a little of the spite they feel against England for checkmating their war plans. Herr Autor and his staff are as nice as possible to us.

*Saturday, 22 August.* It became very dark in the morning and I thought we were in for a thunderstorm, but when I spoke of it I was told it was an eclipse of the sun.

*Sunday, 23 August.* Dr. Schott told one of his patients how different it was in other places, and in Frankfurt there was a very bitter feeling against the English. A nice Russian girl, governess to a Russian family of two ladies, came to W. to have her name

enrolled, and told her how coming through Frankfurt, they were arrested and imprisoned for hours, only getting some black bread and miserable coffee, searched and never even told why they were arrested; when they were allowed they came on here. Flags are out all over the town on account of the German victory near Metz, and the children in the streets are playing at soldiers! Poor little things! They have no idea what war really means.

*Tuesday, 25 August.* W. and Miss G. had met Admiral and Mrs. Neeld returning from a quiet walk—he is not at all well. After luncheon Mrs. Neeld came here dreadfully upset to ask for help, as when they got to their Hotel, a policeman was waiting to arrest the Admiral! Fifteen minutes was given them to put up his things, when he was driven to the station for Frankfurt, with a detective beside him and two armed soldiers opposite. Mrs. Neeld had to carry his bag there as the men would not do so. When she asked why he was arrested and how long they would detain him, all they would answer was, "He will be kept till the end of the war!!!" And this to a feeble old retired Admiral, who has been here for years for his heart, and has complications now! I fancy the fact that Lord Fisher\* is Mrs. Neeld's father is the reason. The American Vice-Consul at Frankfurt was telephoned to and asked to come, which he did after dinner, "a lovely boy," who did his best in telephoning and wiring to the Military Commandant, with the result that about 12 at night we were woken to be told the Admiral had been let out to the American Consulate.

Mr. Smythe was arrested on Sunday! he is supposed to have helped two Englishwomen to escape.

*Wednesday, 26 August.* Yesterday Lady Macdonald of the Isles came to see me in the garden. She knew my pretty nieces, the Brooke girls,† at Pau.

We heard that the Admiral was to be back to-day, and after luncheon he and Mrs. Neeld came to report themselves, and thank us. He was put in the common cell, and had to walk up and down many steps to be examined by the Dr., his cell not even having the commonest necessities!! It was absolutely airless and without light. Fortunately he was let out before midnight.

The Town government has told Herr Autor to take down the name "Prince of Wales" from this Hotel and in the town they have effaced any English notices!!

A procession of children passed with flags and music, and a figure stuffed with straw, supposed to be a wounded French soldier,

\* First Lord of the Admiralty.

† My cousins, Hylda and Kathleen.

women following and cheering and urging them on, it is all very sad. No news of poor Ingoldsby Smythe, we suppose he is in Frankfurt.

*Thursday, 27 August.* Mr. Sterne heard from Frankfurt that we are not to leave till after the war is ended!!! The Americans went off in a special train, straight to the Hague yesterday, the Germans are most anxious to flatter them, and show them how differently they are looked on from the English; the Band was at the station to play for them, and each one was given roses, and a white book, *Why Germany went to War*. I only hope they won't be hoodwinked and will tell about Admiral Neeld's treatment when they get to England.

All the people in our hotel were moved down to the first floor to reduce the expenses and work.

*Friday, 28 August.* How different the Overseas Club's 4th Birthday yesterday was from what I had anticipated. I had imagined a picnic with W. and E. where we had it two years ago and tea at Johannisberg on the golf-links, and dinner at the Kurhaus, instead a wet day, we three prisoners here, and no home news (except through an odd Dutch or Italian paper) and this hatred of the English now.

We saw a number of the wounded (the first who have arrived here) being brought to the Red Cross Hospital in motors, carriages, bath-chairs and stretchers; one girl in the crowd recognised her lover, badly wounded, on a stretcher; and a wife recognised her husband; they had been for five days in the train!! The saddest sights I have ever seen. Then in the night about 4 o'clock a train came in with more, to a Hospital just opposite our Hotel!

I finished knitting a pair of socks for the German soldiers, other Englishwomen here are knitting cuffs, and dusters. We saw several officers and soldiers walking about with bound-up arms and heads.

*Sunday, 30 August.* We heard that Ingoldsby Smythe has been allowed out from his cell in Frankfurt: it was 14 ft. by 4 ft 6 in. in size, only lighted and aired by a wired-up place, high up, a straw mattress and pillow, and a folding seat chained to the wall being the only furniture. His suitcase was taken from him, so that he had no brush or comb or even toothbrush all the time, and no sanitary arrangements, he was fed twice a day on black bread and almost undrinkable coffee, and for dinner had a kind of porridge made of potatoes and meal. He was alone and without even a book at first, but the last two days he was allowed two books.

When he came back, his first visit (after reporting at the Police Office) was to the barber's to have himself shaved and brushed! But as he told the truth when asked about his treatment, he was visited by the police in the evening and warned!! The news of the British naval victory near Heligoland was cheerful; also F. got from Hamburg 1,000 marks, so evidently E. had sent this from Coutts.

*Wednesday, 2 Sept.* Poor Mrs. Neeld was brought up to the Police Office, and asked why she had told lies about the Admiral's treatment in the criminal cell. So they evidently are afraid of the truth being known. She was allowed out after being told she would be "severely punished" if she spoke of it again!!

Poor Ingoldsby Smythe, to try and pass the time in the cell in Frankfurt, scratched squares on his stool (which was chained to the wall) for a chess-board; then he pricked his fingers, and with his blood stained the alternate squares and with crumbs of bread played draughts!!!

At 12 last night we were woken by shouting, bell ringing and singing and Band playing, which came nearer and at last down our street and past the Hospitals; how could the poor soldiers sleep? And 32 French wounded prisoners are in the Hospital opposite! We thought the populace might attack the Hotel, but they did nothing, only march about the town, making a great noise. At last about 1.30 they stopped and we got a little sleep. They have gained two small victories, and the telegram coming in about 11, in the middle of their Sedan speeches, excited them.\*

*3 September.* A wire came in answer to ours to the American Ambassador in Berlin (Mr. Gerard) to say, "No British are to be allowed to leave." It seems rather crushing.

*4 September.* Again woken last night before 1 by a yelling mob. At last the Sister, on night duty, at the Hospital opposite, came out on the balcony, and begged them to be quiet, saying the soldiers had given their blood for their country and needed rest and sleep, so I trust our nights may now be quiet. We heard later that they banged at the doors of the "Langsdorf," and the "Englischer Hof", shouting for the Russians to come out!!!

*Thursday, 10 September.* Mrs. Chilcote reads the Italian paper, which stated that Lord K. had got over a large Russian force from Archangel by sea, and landed them in Belgium. Can it be true?

\* This evidently referred to Hindenburg's great victory at Tannenberg which freed East Prussia from the Russian menace. See page 112.

*Friday, 11 September.* No further news in the papers of the Russian troops being in England.

*Tuesday, 15 September.* A letter from Mr. Ives, American Consul at Frankfurt, to say we can leave on the 21st direct to Flushing. Thank God for that, and everyone in great delight, but I fear I just cried, after the long weary strain, I seemed only now to realise what we have been going through and to doubt the certainty of this news.

*Friday, 18 September.* F. went to Koch and Lauter's and came back in great excitement, as they had showed him a letter from Berlin saying "no men, only women and children are to be allowed to leave," so of course I said I wouldn't dream of going, but W. ought to go and tell E. and all the family and the authorities of our life here.

*Wednesday, 23 September.* The poor Russian cure-guests (about 600) were at the station about 4.30 a.m. and left at 9 for a long journey to the Baltic and then to Finland; anyone who helped them (by order of the Government) even by giving them water on route, to be "severely punished."

*Thursday, 24 September.* A *Daily Mail* of the 15th (last Tuesday) came through yesterday—everyone has been devouring it! We got it to-day about 11, it is good to see an English paper with true and fair news again. Saw of the death of Percy Wyndham. Poor, poor Lady Grosvenor.

*Friday, 25 September.* W. came and showed me the code she has planned and I gave her home messages. After luncheon we went to the station and saw her off, the party consisted of about 50 English women. Well! in spite of the sadness of being left behind, it was something to feel they had gone and could do some good for us at home. There were two carriages full of recruits singing on the train.

The Poles at the Hotel du Nord told us that when the Russian train got to the next station (the day they left here) one man was dead from the crowding!!!

*Tuesday, 29 September.* We hope to go (D.V.) on Thursday, when we get an order from the Police! But coming home from the Teich, where we had tea, we met Mr. Smythe, who told us the local authorities had received a special messenger from Berlin to-day, who said that owing to some new war efforts, no one is to be allowed out for a time: so what are we to do?

A number of wounded soldiers came in to-day, Gretchen advised Sara not to let the *alte Dame* (me) see them, they were so badly disfigured.

*Friday, 2 October.* We finally settled to leave at 12.30, so had an early luncheon. Mr. Cohen and Mr. Meyer\* kindly came to Frankfurt and saw us off at 2 for Munich. They gave us beautiful roses and fruit and eau de Cologne for the journey, it was sad to see them standing on the platform and to feel they could not also come.

We reached Munich after 10, very tired, but we could not help being amused at the evident determination of the Hotel proprietor and officials to pretend they knew no English, when we began to talk it they replied in German. Soldiers with loaded rifles were at the Munich station.

*Saturday, 3 October, Zurich, Switzerland.* We arrived at Zurich after 5; we sent a wire to E. and drove to the Hotel Baur au Lac. We got comfortable rooms facing the Lake, which looked lovely and peaceful.

We slept fairly well, and by degrees will be able to feel that at last we are free. I am now lying on the sofa in my room writing, Sara is unpacking, for the first time since the 2nd August when we packed for our flight!

In the train to Munich there were many wounded men, and one quite young officer, who was evidently being brought home by his parents, had his whole face and head bound in white bandages, with holes cut for his eyes and mouth! Truly war is a terrible thing.

It is a relief to see the Swiss papers. It was almost impossible not to talk of all we went through at Nauheim with the Yerburchs and Seatons and of those poor people left behind at Nauheim, but I so nearly broke down several times, that Mr. Yerburch soon found it wiser to talk of other things. I discovered at dinner that Mr. Yerburch was a friend of Cecil Rhodes from his boyhood. They were at Oxford together, and Cecil Rhodes was godfather to Mr. Y.'s second son. So I was of course keenly interested to hear all he had to tell about him. Cecil Rhodes begged him to go to South Africa with him but Mr. Y. was then at the Bar, got engaged to be married, so he refused.

*Saturday, 10 October.* Heard a rumour in the afternoon that Antwerp had fallen, but I do not believe it, though some of the small forts may have been captured.

*Monday, 19 October, Lyons.* We left for Lyons at 10 in the morning and passed through a mountainous country, and the colouring of the trees wonderfully beautiful.

*Wednesday, 21 October, Paris.* F. and S. prowled about Lyons.

\* Two British friends.

They saw 50 guns taken from the Germans and said there was a decaying look about everything, troops going off and many wounded—specially Zouaves.

*Goring Hotel, London, Friday, 23 October.* We left Paris about 8 in the morning, and went through beautiful country to Dieppe. It was dreadful to think how this terrible war is destroying the homesteads and farms so comparatively near; every place was guarded by soldiers, and in Paris we saw many Zouaves at the station. We reached Dieppe about 1.

*Goring Hotel, Sunday, 25 October.* I should like this diary letter back please, as it tells something of our life at Nauheim. I brought it back inside the lining of my knitting basket to escape detection at the German frontier. C.M.W.



# Chapter VIII

## THE EMPIRE AND THE WAR

MOBILISING THE FORCES OF LIGHT—THE DERBY SCHEME—  
THE OVERSEAS TOBACCO FUND—THE OVERSEAS AIRCRAFT  
FLOTILLA

## Chapter VIII

### THE EMPIRE AND THE WAR

#### MOBILISING THE FORCES OF LIGHT

*"Come, Holy Ghost, our souls inspire  
And lighten with celestial fire."*

NO one ever prayed harder for celestial fire than I did when I returned to London at the end of August, 1914 to throw myself into the task of linking up the Empire, now that the testing time had come. In those days, while I had flashes of religious faith, and while I tried with many back-slidings to keep in mind Ruskin's fine phrase, "The education of a knight was, first, to subdue his body, bring it into subjection and perfect strength, then to take Christ for his captain, and live as always in His Presence", my real religion was the British Commonwealth. I do not think there is any thrill of patriotic emotion that I have not experienced. As I watched Mussolini and Hitler at close quarters in recent years, I thought that the pre-war I would have felt quite at home in their deification of the State!

My patriotism prior to 1910 had much in common with the doctrines preached by Fascist and Nazi patriots. In those days I was not prepared to accept a greater objective than the furtherance of the interests of the British Commonwealth, apart from the task of bringing together the United States and the British Empire. Very few people reached the standard of patriotic fervour that I considered essential. Among the few were Cecil Rhodes, Albert Lord Grey, Lord Curzon, Alfred Deakin in Australia, "Dick" Seddon in New Zealand, and Lord Milner and Joseph Chamberlain at home; while in the United States I considered that Theodore Roosevelt passed my test!

Curzon, in particular, seemed to me to grasp the spiritual grandeur of the Empire better than anyone apart from

Cecil Rhodes. I remember how quickly my heart beat, when I first read the Viceroy's Calcutta speech in February, 1902, in which he referred to India's need of us and our need of India. "Let the Englishman and the Indian accept the consecration of a union that is so mysterious as to have in it something of the divine, and let our common ideal be a united country and a happier people." That was it. The world mission of the British Commonwealth was so mysterious as to have in it something of the divine. Curzon came home to receive the freedom of the City of London in 1904, shortly after I had joined Northcliffe's staff, after my postcard failure. In the mood of distrust of self, of wounded pride and of uncertainty as to my future in those early days at Carmelite House, it was balm to my soul to forget the recent past\* and to lose myself and my worries by plunging into the flood of Curzon's eloquence at the Mansion House :

I am not one of those who think that we have built a mere fragile plank between East and West, which the roaring tides of Asia will presently sweep away. I do not think that our work is over or that it is drawing to an end. On the contrary, as the years roll by, the call seems to me more clear, the duty more imperative, the work more magnetic, the goal more sublime. . . . To me the message is carved in granite, it is hewn out of the rock of doom—that our work is righteous and that it shall endure."

When I returned from my Empire tour, alive in every fibre of my being with enthusiasm for Imperial unity and with the knowledge that destiny had linked me up with the self-governing Dominions as few Englishmen had been linked before, I started to organise my Empire movement with great fervour. The first materialisation of my idea, the tiny acorn which would one day be an oak tree, was the opening of our three modest rooms, which looked out on the new building containing the offices of the Australian Commonwealth, on the second floor of General Buildings, Aldwych, by the Lord Mayor on Empire Day, 1914.

\* See *Uphill*, Chapter XI, for an account of my postcard failure.

I was still seeking for some tangible work to give the far-flung members of the Overseas Club, some work into which they could throw themselves, irrespective of creed, colour or class, something spectacular which would make the people in the Old Country understand that our fellow citizens across the seas were fully alive to our common heritage. As soon as the war broke out I realised that the longed-for opportunity had arrived, although in a manner I had never envisaged. The supreme task for all who had special ties with the outer Empire was to throw every ounce of energy into organising its effort, to forge fresh bonds of sentiment that would endure for all time.

The British Commonwealth was demonstrating by its action that the men of vision had been justified. Within its boundaries full scope was given to Dominion Nationalism. The miracle of the twentieth century had been achieved, the precursor of world unity one day. Independence and co-operation had been reconciled in one political system. Ireland had discarded agitation, a wave of patriotism was sweeping across Australia and New Zealand, British Canada was speaking in no uncertain terms. In South Africa Generals Botha and Smuts and their followers had been true to their word, they had stood by the British connection. From the first the Beyers Rebellion was destined to fail. I recalled talks with General Botha, ten months before at Pretoria, when he told me that if ever the Empire were assailed, such was his gratitude to Campbell-Bannerman for giving self-government to his country that he would be among the first to take up arms in its defence.\*

I regarded myself in the light of an unofficial representative of the peoples of the Dominions and of the British communities in foreign countries. I considered that I understood their point of view. Owing to my Irish blood and upbringing I was often able to establish friendly relations with oversea folk, more rapidly than the hundred-

\* See *Uphill*, page 295-7.

per-cent. Englishman. During the next two years, until I joined the Royal Flying Corps, there was not a day on which I was not in touch with my friends overseas, either by correspondence or when they came from the five continents to offer their services. There were great moments of elation—too deep to be put into words, despite the seemingly endless delays, disappointments and disillusionments in the conduct of the war in those early days.

The men and women I had met overseas were here. The call of the blood was a reality—the call was even greater than mere blood affinity. French-Canadians, Dutch-South Africans, Indians and Chinese, West Africans and West Indians were all joining in. Representatives of almost every calling, that I had met overseas, came to see me at Aldwych. Farmers from the Canadian West or Queensland, banana and coffee planters from the West Indies, fruit growers from the Transvaal and New Zealand, miners of diamonds, gold, coal and iron from South Africa, British Columbia and West Australia, ostrich farmers from Natal, lighthouse-keepers from lonely outposts on the high seas, sheep-shearers from the great Australian plains, cattle-hands from Rhodesia, officers and men in the Merchant Service—it was a marvellous medley from the Seven Seas. If Germany expected a breaking of the bonds of Empire, she was destined to disillusionment. Those links of sentiment were stronger than rivets of steel. Freedom could compel allegiance, but force never. The lessons of the American Revolution had been taken to heart.

My vision of the Overseas Club was of the greatest brotherhood of service in the British Empire. I thought then that there was no limit to its development. In those days we included in our membership 180,000 associates who had bought our badge and pledged themselves to work for our aims. Our membership certificates were hanging on the walls of thousands of Empire homesteads. I looked forward to a membership of millions.

Sir Robert Baden-Powell took a great interest in our work. On Empire Day, 1918, he said :

That he looked upon the Overseas Club as an elder brother of the Boy Scouts' Association, and he hoped that one day they might be definitely affiliated as a junior branch. These two societies were born about the same time and were of equal numerical strength, were both Empire-wide and had much the same ideal and sympathies. The only difference was that one was for grown-ups and the other for the growing-ups.\*

Very often kind friends congratulate me on the work of the Overseas League, which is to-day the largest Empire movement. They little guess that compared with the high hopes I had in mind, the Overseas League, despite its £80,000 a year income, is but a shadow of what I expected. I have never made this admission in writing before. I thought then that I had started a movement as great as the Scouts. Presumably I had over-estimated my gifts as an organiser.

The service of others, of the citizens of the British Commonwealth was the essential for membership of the Overseas League. My conception of the Empire was not that of a British-run Empire. I knew from first-hand knowledge that there was a gigantic task to be performed in bringing together Englishmen and Irishmen, French and British Canadians, Dutch and British South Africans ; apart from the even greater task of giving a conscious sense of citizenship to the millions living under the Union Jack. The Empire was too widely scattered and too varied in origin to be run by a handful of people who hailed from two small islands in the northern seas.

While I read my oversea correspondence, specially sent over to me from London, after the day's work on the *Paris Daily Mail*, in my bedroom at the Hotel Louvois in August, 1914, I was constantly thinking-out my plans for the future. I was eagerly awaiting the time when I could relinquish my Paris job and tackle the task in

\* Speech at the annual meeting of the Overseas Club and Patriotic League held at General Building, Aldwych, London, Empire Day, 1918.

earnest. Entertaining and welcoming troops and visitors from Greater Britain and the British communities in foreign countries was one side of our work. But there was—to me—the greater task of linking up, by every possible means, the peoples living in each one of the seventy-five pieces of territory, dotted over the earth's surface, that made up the British Empire. To help to provide outlets for their enthusiasm and generosity, to make them realise, as never before, that they were members of one body—a body that would endure; to bring home to them the fact that we were carrying on a “holy war”, a crusade against militarism and the rule of might—the battle between our concepts of liberty and justice and the forces of darkness.

Few can have had more communications from the various fronts and from the high seas than I did. There were ten thousand members of the Overseas Club serving. Through our various war funds we were sending hundreds of thousands of parcels of tobacco, hampers and comforts to the Forces. I wish I had made a collection of this correspondence. Alas, it has vanished in our various moves and extensions. I only kept some special letters that had personal value. There were, despite the cynics, great numbers of our men who during the first two years regarded the war as a crusade. An officer in H.M.S. *Queen Mary*, who subsequently lost his life in the battle of Jutland, wrote to me:

You know me well enough to know that I do not love war or the idea of killing anybody, or having my own friends killed or maimed for life; but I tell you I'd rather see Great Britain a dung-heap and every Briton killed, than fail to attain what we are fighting for in this war, and that is that nations should be allowed to go their own way peacefully as long as they do not hurt their neighbours, and that honour and solemn promises should mean what we always understood them to mean.

Christianity is at stake against the worship of Might, and that is only the old religion of Thor and Odin. . . . To me (and I believe all of us) this war is a spiritual war, like the old Crusades originally were to the men of the Middle Ages.

## THE DERBY SCHEME

Doubtless every man in the thirties, who was not in the front-line trenches, went through difficult moments. Was he doing the utmost to help to win the war? I suppose there was not a week during those long fifty-one months in which I did not ask myself that question. In August, 1914, I decided that however strong my patriotic emotion my duty was to steer to success the Empire organisation that I had created—work that I alone could do. I did not wish, however, to rely solely on my own judgment, so I discussed my position with men for whom I had a great admiration, such as Albert Lord Grey and Sir Arthur Lawley. They confirmed me in my decision. I informed the military authorities that I would carry on with my work until such time as they required my services. I also informed the Colonial Secretary of my position. On the national registration form on Monday, 16 August, 1915, I wrote: "I am willing to undertake any work which would be of greater use to the country than that on which I am already engaged. The War Office has been informed to this effect." When the Derby scheme was put into operation I at once signed on in November, 1915, and received 2s. 6d. and a khaki armlet!

To remain in mufti and run the risk of being thought a shirker was part of the price every man in civilian clothes had to pay. On one occasion, when there was bad news from the front, I went round to seek a commission in a Guards regiment. On making application to the authorities I was informed that my services were more usefully employed in my present position.

Early in 1917, when every available man was required, my call, under the Derby scheme, came. I went to the Air Board and applied for a commission in the Kite Balloon Section in France, only to be told that two sections of the Royal Flying Corps wanted my services for organising



work at home. From the national standpoint, the only difference in my changed status was that instead of working for the nation in an honorary capacity I received a subaltern's pay!

### THE OVERSEAS TOBACCO FUND

One afternoon in September, 1914, just when I was weighing in my mind the claims of the various recently established War Funds and the most urgent needs of the troops in the coming winter, a man with a deep voice, a bald head, a ready sense of humour and an attractive personality, smoking a cigarette through an abnormally long holder, came into my office. An appointment had previously been made on the telephone for me with Mr. Walter Martin, of the Piccadilly tobacco firm. For an hour we plunged into the problem of organising an Overseas Club Tobacco Fund for the troops. We discussed the subject of producing leaflets asking our members overseas and their friends to give generously. Mr. Martin has one of the most prolific minds for devising methods of salesmanship that I have ever come across.

At the end of an hour we had drawn up our plan of campaign. After the first five minutes I knew that I had found just the kind of "human" fund I was seeking—a scheme that would establish contact between the soldier at the front and the resident overseas, that would give the men in the army constant reminders that they were in the thoughts of the peoples of the outer Empire. There and then we decided upon a very large circularising campaign. Mr. Martin—"W.M." he is called by his friends—devised a leaflet that would have drawn blood from a stone. In moving language was set forth Tommy's longing for cigarettes. Each collecting list had space for fifty names. Every donor of a shilling or upwards entered his name and address. In each packet of cigarettes was enclosed an addressed postcard to the donor. All Tommy had to

do was to write a few lines of thanks to his unknown friend.

The scheme caught on like wild-fire. Every foreign mail brought us larger and larger bundles of collecting lists and cash. Within sixteen months we had received donations from 254,958 people outside Great Britain. I made full use of my Press connections. The *Times Weekly* and the overseas edition of the *Daily Mail* gave generous and invaluable support. We mobilised as local agents the Press throughout the Empire. Money was remitted in every imaginable form of currency. Dirty bank notes, parcels of silver coins, postal orders and money orders from every country in the postal union came in a steady flow to my office. Subscribers sent us jewellery and trinkets to be sold. A farmer in Rhodesia put up an ox for auction and sent us the proceeds. The scheme advertised itself. Every postcard back from the trenches aroused fresh interest locally. We were inundated with demands for further collecting lists. There was hardly a village or hamlet in the British Empire, nor a foreign town with British residents or British sympathisers, that had not willing workers for our cause.

As the war advanced our methods improved. Canadian and Australian troops had their favourite brands of tobacco. Mr. Martin was ready for all emergencies. We purchased Canadian-manufactured tobacco from the Imperial Tobacco Company of Canada and Messrs. Tucketts, Hamilton, Ontario and in Australia obtained tobacco from W.D. & H.O. Wills (Australia) Limited. We had the largest card index of patriotic British subjects ever assembled. Before the end of the war we had received money from several millions of donors. The Overseas Tobacco Fund had enthusiastic supporters from Auckland to Athabasca, from Port Stanley to Portree. Martin constantly came to me with fresh ideas. Early in 1915 he suggested an appeal to the school-children in the elementary schools of the British Isles. We obtained the requisite permission from the authorities. A small

coloured certificate, half the size of a postcard, was given to every child, with a request for a penny. In 1915 we collected over £10,000 in pennies on Empire Day from the children; in 1916, 2,848,806 children gave pennies. Postcards of thanks went direct from the trenches to the schools. The entire cost of organising was borne by the suppliers. Every shilling subscribed to the Fund went to the troops. A careful audit was made. Occasionally there were grumbles—perhaps the tobacco would not arrive in good condition—but on the whole the fund worked amazingly smoothly, largely due to Mr. Martin's genius for organising.

When at Boulogne I made a point of questioning the British soldiers I met as to whether they were plentifully supplied with smokes. The usual answer was to the effect that the Government weekly ration of tobacco lasted about a day. (*Letter, November, 1915.*)

I have never understood why "W.M." is not a multi-millionaire. I am told he has made four fortunes and lost them. I have known few more generous men. His purse was ever open. No friend or employee ever went away empty-handed when business was good. During the war I went to Martin several times for charitable causes. I usually came away with a cheque for £500 or £1,000. No employer was ever more popular with his workpeople. He treated them as equals, and was always "W.M." to them.

#### THE OVERSEAS AIRCRAFT FLOTILLA

Shortly after getting the Tobacco Fund established I turned my attention to the air. The provision of smokes was all very well, but we were engaged in a life-and-death struggle. Our society must seek to link up residents overseas with the Empire's war effort on the battlefield. Aviation was more or less in its infancy oversea. I cannot remember having seen any aircraft during my









Empire tour 1912-1913. The idea suddenly occurred to me that nothing would make some of the smaller or more isolated sections of the Empire feel so linked up with the great events in Europe and in the East as aircraft named after their districts. Australia had her super-Dreadnought. Why should not Ceylon and St. Kitts have their aircraft?

I went to see the officials at the War Office in the early days of the war, and in January, 1915, I received a formal letter of approval from the Army Council.\* I launched my appeal and within four months the first six aircraft were presented. Within a year we had collected £100,000. On hearing of the gift of our first machine, Lord Kitchener wrote to me :

War Office, Whitehall, S.W.  
17 May, 1915

Dear Sir,

I am gratified to hear of the prompt response to the appeal issued by the Overseas Club to its members and friends in all parts of His Majesty's Dominions overseas, which has already permitted the presentation of an aeroplane to the Royal Flying Corps.

I was interested to learn that the aeroplane in question had been paid for by the generous donations of several thousands of British subjects overseas, and, as I understand that you are hoping to obtain the gift of an aeroplane from each part of the Empire, I sincerely wish you success in your efforts.

Yours very truly,  
(signed) KITCHENER.

I immediately got out 100,000 special leaflets with messages received from the King and Lord Kitchener. Few leaflets can have had bigger results. Week by week until the end of the war we presented one or more aeroplanes to the Forces. Apart from the two or three hundred aircraft we presented directly, our propaganda inspired many others to do likewise. Aircraft bearing inscriptions, *Victoria, Hong Kong, Nova Scotia, Saskatchewan, Shanghai Race Club, The Springbok, Mount Lofty, A Devil Bird from Ceylon*, went soaring over the

\* See page 481 in Appendix A.



enemy lines. When the original machines were destroyed, others were named after them, so the link between the far-off British communities and the battlefield was preserved throughout the war. "My brain was whirling in my dreams about the first Overseas aeroplane, our new club rooms, and the granting of the King's patronage. I woke up at 4.30 and could not get to sleep again as my mind was so humming on these things." (*Letter, May, 1915.*)

Apart from our Aircraft and Tobacco Funds we wanted some central organisation that would deal with all the requests for relief and that would act as a clearing house between the overseas donors and the claimants for help. This extract is taken from an article\* written by Lady des Vœux in January, 1918, in which she described how our Soldiers & Sailors' Fund, of which she was chairman, grew from very small beginnings to a turnover of £1,000 a week :

I remember so well the commencement of our Soldiers and Sailors' Fund, the almost haphazard way in which it started over three years ago. Mr. Wrench had received a large consignment of cases of clothes from generous friends at Dunedin and Oamaru, New Zealand, and was most anxious that they should be disposed of to the best possible advantage. He asked me if I would undertake their distribution. This I gladly consented to do. . . . In those early days I dealt with all the correspondence, such as it was, myself, and I used to go out shopping every day, selecting the contents of the hampers and even making up the parcels myself. Now that we send out several hundreds of hampers daily, and two secretaries are kept busy dealing with the large correspondence, it is amusing to look back on that time.

Then began my cousin's intimate association with the Overseas League.† For twenty-one years in an honorary capacity, apart from holidays and periods of ill-health, she has never missed a day at headquarters. Voluntary effort is frequently considered unreliable. No paid worker has rendered greater service to the organisation in these

\* *Overseas*, Feb., 1918, p. 45.

† She started to work for the Overseas League in 1914.

twenty-one years. As Honorary Controller of our society she has won the friendship and respect of every member of the staff and of all who have met her. The secret of her great influence is that she never thinks of herself. For twenty-four years she has advised me at every stage of the Overseas League's development. The debt I owe to her I can never repay.

Cases of fruit from South African members, coffee beans from Aden, cases of hospital supplies, large consignments of books from Messrs. Doubleday, Page & Co., New York,\* kodaks, musical instruments, playing cards, gramophones, barber's outfits, a ventriloquist's doll—every kind of requisition from the troops was dealt with by our Fund, from a demand for a crucifix and a rosary to requests for fingerless gloves for the men on tank vessels and mine-sweepers.

The Overseas Club supported beds in very many of the Red Cross Hospitals. In a letter to our members overseas I described a visit to the Star and Garter Hospital, Richmond, in the summer of 1916 :

No one can visit the "Star and Garter" as it is to-day without being tremendously affected. Anything we can do for the disabled seems so little; and perhaps nowhere—certainly at no other place which I have visited—does the tragic side of the War come home to one so ruthlessly. There is no glamour here, no excitement; just sixty paralysed young men—and their number will have grown to hundreds when the new buildings are finished. Sixty men—mere boys they look—without the power of movement from the waist downwards, who for the rest of their lives will spend their days lying in those beds. Sixty men who have served their country in Flanders, Gallipoli and Mesopotamia—and the end of it all is this Home for Disabled, with a tablet over each bed with the words, "Private Smith, Suvla Bay, August, 1915," or some other name and date.

On the day of my visit, Major Dickie, the medical officer, had just installed a new lift into which the men's beds could be pushed and taken out of doors to the specially prepared verandah—on the roof of the old stables. For the "Star and Garter" has historic associations, and in these stables in the "good old times" were

\* They were old friends of mine. Dr. Walter Hines Page was one of the partners.

housed as many as sixty coaches and a hundred and twenty horses. From the roof of the erstwhile stables the patients will look on the favourite view of Turner and Scott, the River Thames, winding through the tall elms and losing itself in the haze.

I asked one man in the Royal Marine Light Infantry, wounded at Gallipoli, in one of the beds provided as the result of our Empire Day appeal, "Is there anything you want?" I shall never forget the look on his face as he replied, "No, thanks, people have been very good—I have plenty of smokes and can't read much, and they send me fruit which I can't eat. I don't want anything, but it is very good of your members all the same."

Some of the less serious cases, although paralysed, are able to sit up and wheel themselves about in little chairs, and I passed two groups of them playing cards. But it is the memory of the poor fellows lying on their backs that I carried away. After leaving the "Star and Garter" I walked across to Richmond Park and sat on a chair near the gate. A company of Scots Guards out drilling marched by. I shut my eyes and listened to their regular step in perfect unison crunching the gravel. They walked so erect and they looked so full of life. What a contrast to the occupants of the beds just across the road.

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# Chapter IX

## THE DOGS OF WAR LET LOOSE

SEPTEMBER—DECEMBER 1914.

*The sustained and driving enthusiasm necessary for the conduct of modern war cannot be maintained in the comparatively pure form which it exhibited at its outbreak. It is a fire which requires continually to be stoked by hatred. Hatred is, in fact, the best substitute for action. It was common knowledge that hatred of the enemy was far more intense and indiscriminate among civilians of all countries than among soldiers. The stimulation of fear and hatred was, therefore, necessarily one of the chief weapons of politicians and the Press.*

C. R. M. F. CRUTTWELL,  
The Listener, 6 Feb., 1935

BACK IN LONDON—NO. 87 VICTORIA STREET—THE  
RUSSIAN “STEAM-ROLLER” — “FRIGHTFULNESS” —  
THE FOG OF WAR—THE WAR GOD’S APPETITE FOR MEN

## Chapter IX

### THE DOGS OF WAR LET LOOSE

BACK IN LONDON—No. 87, VICTORIA STREET

ON my return to London I settled down in a service flat at 87, Victoria Street. The windows of my bedroom in Artillery Row faced the Army & Navy Stores, for many years a building of romance to my youthful mind.\* After spending nearly five years under my cousins' roof, I felt the solitude of life in a flat, but what were one's personal problems in a rocking world? The war had a salutary way of giving a right perspective.

When I came to 87, Victoria Street I intended to stay twelve months. I actually remained till I migrated to Chelsea at the end of 1930. During the sixteen years at "No. 87" I changed my quarters three times. I started with a large but gloomy flat on the first floor, some years later because of a falling exchequer I moved to rooms on the third floor; finally, thanks to the comparative prosperity of post-war days I changed to a delightful flat overlooking Christ Church, Westminster. From my bedroom window I watched the little blobs of the swaying plane trees—"children of the Mist." To me plane trees look out of place in the country, it is to London they belong.

The inmates of 87, Victoria Street had their meals in two cheery red-curtained, red-carpeted coffee rooms on the sixth floor. There were decided advantages in a service flat if you took your meals in the public coffee-room. Your loneliness assumed proper proportions. There were many other solitary people sitting at separate tables—human beings who, like you, for some reason or other were temporarily at least debarred from family life. Meals gave plentiful opportunity for the study of

\* See *Uphill*, page 1.

my fellows. What was the life-story of that bachelor, who had served his country in Asia for nearly four decades? Why had he never married? Was a solitary flat in Victoria Street to be the final stage in his earthly pilgrimage? Why was that attractive widow with the sad face here? Surely she must have some friend with whom she could share this bit of the road? And that rubicund and hearty warrior with the infectious laugh, why was he to be found in the flotsam and jetsam of a London service flat?

I can call to mind a regular "cavalcade of ghosts"; the sweet-faced spinster, whose tombstone I ran across years after under a red-berried yew in a churchyard in Kent; the man-about-town with the weak face and the predilection for neat whisky; the business-woman—a new type of "bachelor girl" appeared upon the scenes early in the war—with the roving eye; the elderly couple, overflowing with the milk of human kindness, whose only failing was a desire to impart their views on the war just at the moment when you yourself were disentangling the optimistic notices of the Press Bureau; the young "newly-weds"—he on leave from the front, she fragrant and feminine—in those days we did not talk about sex appeal—whose happiness was always tempered by the knowledge that the sands of the hour-glass were running down; the attractive middle-aged spinster, undoubtedly with a past; the social reformer, whose fine features were always an inspiration. A curious cross-section of the big world thrown together for a time under one roof on this whirling planet, never again to be assembled on this side of the grave.

### THE RUSSIAN "STEAM-ROLLER"

We were living in an entirely new world and the unexpected was always happening. The war of pre-conceived ideas did not exist. During my stay in France in August I had lived from day to day, a visit to the

B.E.F. headquarters seemed part of the usual routine. We were so close to great events that we thought we must really know all that was happening, in reality we were woefully ignorant. In London the war seemed far away and there was an ominous silence about the British army. Temporarily at least the Press was powerless. Northcliffe fumed and fretted about the refusal to allow correspondents to keep the British public informed. To no avail. We were given daily doses of optimism by the Press Bureau. We read of continuous victories, but I was becoming sceptical. In the Paris press I had been nurtured on optimism, and in the course of twenty days the Germans had over-run Belgium and Northern France, and a whole string of French and Belgian towns and fortresses had gone down like ninepins before their massed hordes. The invaders were unpleasantly close to Paris. I was sure that the German military staff of supermen would capture it before many weeks had passed. Not that I ever doubted an ultimate allied victory. It was reassuring to know that "Great Britain, France, and Russia had undertaken not to conclude peace separately during the present war." While Great Britain and the Empire were getting ready their new armies, those millions of patient Russian peasants would keep both the Central Powers busy. Sooner or later I supposed that Russia would be able to put into the field an army of twelve millions.

At the end of August, 1914, we all looked to Russia. We had reason for our faith, for the greater part of Eastern Prussia was over-run by the Tsar's armies. An Austrian force of 120,000 had been heavily defeated on the Southern front. Telegrams from St. Petersburg were couched in optimistic terms. *The Times* printed a message from the Russian capital in which we read, "Eye-witnesses say that the German officers and men ran like rabbits, discarding their swords and even their clothes." Another day we learnt that the Tsar had offered a reward of £5,000 to the first Russian soldier to



enter Berlin. As late as August 29th the *Spectator* wrote: "We should be by no means surprised if by the middle of September the Russians were able to threaten Berlin." Messages from Copenhagen told us that German refugees arriving from East Prussia described the position as hopeless. If the Russian giant, always a slow starter, was thus early showing his prowess, what might we not expect later on?

Then neutral papers reported from German sources a great German victory and 80,000 prisoners. British comment was guarded. We questioned these reports. We were told, "The effect of the victory seems to be local and the invasion of East Prussia is still proceeding." Thus did British Press optimists deal with Tannenberg, of which Mr. Cruttwell writes: "Few victories in history have been so crushingly complete. . . . Ludendorff named this masterpiece Tannenberg, to avenge the medieval overthrow of the Teutonic Knights by the Slavs."\* The Russian losses to Germany were partially compensated for by the stupendous Austrian losses to Russia in the early months of the war.† Apart from their superb equipment, the strength of the Germans lay in the fact that they were one nation speaking one language. The war had temporarily, as with us, stilled internal dissensions. Austria-Hungary, on the other hand, was a hotch-potch of nationalities, of which Southern Slavs and Czechs had racial affinity with their country's foes.

### FRIGHTFULNESS

*"It is quite impossible to tell the truth in modern war."*

C. R. M. F. CRUTTWELL.

In the autumn of 1914 we began to learn of the ruthlessness of war. War to my generation implied campaigns on the Indian frontier, in Egypt or in South Africa. My

\* C. R. M. F. Cruttwell, *A History of the Great War*, p. 47. Clarendon Press.

† Austrian official statement of Austrian losses.

ideas of European war were derived from panoramas of the Franco-Prussian conflict to be seen in continental cities. It was the war of tradition. Cavalry charged at the foe. When death came, it was a heroic death brought about by heroes on the other side. But war atrocities and "frightfulness" were something new.

With incredulity I read in the Allied Press of German atrocities in Belgium. The statements were, apparently however, well-documented; so liberal-minded a man as Lord Bryce, for whom I had a high regard, believed them after his investigations. Could these be my German officer friends with whom I had spent pleasant days after leaving school? I was bewildered and yet there appeared to be no doubt as to the authenticity of these statements. Surely no self-respecting Government would deliberately circulate lies about its opponents?

It was only later on that I learnt that unsavoury events take place on all sides. Men in all battle areas performed acts we would prefer to forget. I am not seeking to minimise the tribulations and tortures of the Belgian people, but in drawing up a balance sheet of atrocities the jury must be impartial. Perhaps some day under international control a refutation of atrocity stories circulated during the war in all countries will be published? I sincerely hope so. To this day there may be some who believe the story so widely circulated in Allied countries during the war, that the Germans melted down corpses in a factory to provide urgently-needed fats. In those early war days each country thought its cause was one-hundred-per-cent. right and our minds were supplied with a diet designed to arouse our passions against our foes.

Michel Corday\* quotes a typical instance of tendentious war-time propaganda. *La Liberté* displayed satisfaction over a French air raid on Trier, expressing the hope that ancient monuments had been destroyed and many German civilians killed; and in another column of the

\* *The Paris Front*. Gollancz.

same issue the account of a German air raid over the coast of Kent bore the heading "The Pirates." The barometer of hate mounted rapidly. Preconceived ideas were thrown to the winds. We swallowed any theory which would discredit our opponents.

Henceforth in the popular Press the Germans became "the Huns." We prepared for a grim struggle. In a letter to *The Times* Mr. Frederic Harrison wrote :

Be it understood that when the Allies have finally crushed this monstrous brood, the Kaiser—if indeed he choose to survive—shall be submitted to the degradation inflicted on poor Dreyfus. In the presence of Allied troops, let his blood-stained sword be broken on his craven back and the uniform and orders of which he is so childishly proud be stamped in the mire. And if he lives through it, St. Helena or Devil's Island might be his prison and his grave.

There were some who advocated that "ruthlessness" must be countered by greater "ruthlessness." The end justified the means.

By degrees the newspaper gradually came into its own. The desirability of having correspondents at the Front was recognised. Later on the authorities depended more and more on the Press to sustain the public morale. In order to stimulate its civilian population each country used its press to inculcate hate. Germany was not the only country to have its hymn of hate, although we did not have anything quite so bitter as Ernst Lissauer's chant against England, which appeared in *Jugend*. The following is an English translation :

" You we will hate with a lasting hate ;  
 We will never, never forego our hate—  
 Hate by water and hate by land,  
 Hate of the head and hate of the hand,  
 Hate of the hammer and hate of the Crown,  
 Hate of seventy millions, choking down ;  
 We love as one, we hate as one,  
 We have *one* foe, and one alone—

ENGLAND."

Everything was done to extol the prowess of your own side and cast a slur on your opponent. The following extract is taken from an early war book :\* "I speak with knowledge of both English and German soldiers—privates, 'non-coms,' and officers of rank, and I am firmly convinced that one British Tommy is the equal of three Germans of the same rank."

In every country people are hypnotised by the printed word. As a result of constant reiteration the newspaper reader comes to believe that his foe is brutal, a coward and inhumane. Inculcating hate is an easier job than inculcating love. There is hardly a country in Europe which has not at some time or other indulged in mass hatred. During the war, owing to the vastness of the issues at stake, we witnessed the inculcation of mass hatred on a grand scale. The foe was the "perfidious", "the pirate", "the vandal"; the ally was "brave", "noble", "heroic". Once the German, Hungarian, Austrian and Anatolian peasant donned uniform he became the hated foe, "the Hun", "the despised Turk".

Self-interest became the justification for almost any act. The entry into the war of Turkey, Italy, Roumania and Bulgaria was determined by supposed self-interest. National advantage justified any course of action. If Germany first used poison gas in April, 1915, France had to her credit the introduction of liquid fire.† Each nation believed that right was on its side and prayed to the God of Hosts to advance its cause. The nations prayed for the success of their arms, for their brave soldiers, sailors and airmen. To pray for the suffering in enemy countries was the exception. Very often I longed to hear prayers for "them that despitefully use you."

Few of us in the autumn of 1914 had the clarity of vision of Norman Angell, who wrote in the *Spectator* on October 3, 1914:

\* *The German Army from Within*, Hodder & Stoughton, 1914.

† General Dubail stated that his 1st Army was the first to experiment with this weapon in the Argonne, in the autumn of 1914. See Cruttwell, *A History of the Great War*, p. 153.

Nearly everybody who discusses these matters at all has talked vaguely and generally of making this war the occasion for fundamental and thorough-going political reforms in Europe; but nobody begins, and everybody seems to assume that these reforms will come of themselves, without definite and constructive proposals, without discussion, without any disturbance of that inertia which heretofore has always been a guarantee that the old methods survive even cataclysms like that through which we are now passing. What we have proposed is that in the future provinces should not be transferred without some guarantee of the consent of the population; that international engagements should in future have constitutional sanction; that there should be some sincere attempts made to create a Council of Nations and to reduce armaments. These things may be Utopian and impracticable; but as someone remarked the other day, the choice seems to be between Utopia and Hell.

### THE FOG OF WAR

*"This vast fog of war and doom—the worst of it is nobody knows just what is happening."*—WALTER HINES PAGE.\*

In September, 1914, it was difficult to get a coherent picture of the war. We were inadequately supplied with news. The mental fog which had enveloped me in Paris in August continued in London in September.

I have read many war books, but I have never obtained an adequately clear picture of the momentous events that took place on the River Marne from 6–10 September. Mr. Cruttwell writes: "The Marne then was not a miracle as it appeared to amazed contemporaries, but a brilliant advantage rapidly snatched from the enemy's errors."† When Joffre, after continuous retreats, decided to strike, few thought that Paris could be saved. But the "miracle" happened. The Germans had over-stretched themselves, two of their armies had lost touch and there was a gap of twenty miles between them. Their vital reserves were too far in the rear. On the 9th the German armies were in retreat. The Battle of

\* Letter to Arthur Page, 6 November, 1914.

† Cruttwell, *A History of the Great War*, p. 31.

the Marne had the effect of re-establishing our belief in the French military leaders, sadly shaken by the first month of the war. I mistrusted the good news. It did not seem possible that the German war machine could have made such a blunder, but undue optimism has wrecked many causes. Even the Germans were not immune from it. Ten days before the Battle of the Marne they had sent two corps from the West to the Eastern front, where "they arrived as idle spectators of the overwhelming victory which Ludendorff had achieved without their aid . . . their presence would probably have turned the scale at the Marne."\* The Marne taught us that the German high command could make miscalculations. Henceforth there was always the hope that it might be caught napping again.

In looking through my war-time material, I find an article Northcliffe wrote for me in November, 1916.† It is interesting as showing his views on the Marne:

I have been studying the war problem for twenty years—here, in Germany, and in Austria. I suggest that the war will not end suddenly. This is not one war, but many wars, and there are yet further wars to come. In a military sense I hold that Germany was beaten at the moment Von Kluck's back was turned against Paris. Almost immediately after that event I happened to occupy the same hotel bedroom in which that not very successful German General had slept the night before he bolted from —.

He left a good character there. He paid his bills, and made his staff pay their bills, though there was looting of the local museum, whose treasures were put into Red Cross ambulances and packed off to Germany. The people who saw the flight with his staff said that Von Kluck knew what the retreat meant. He has since been retired.

Since the main German scheme—the capture of Paris—failed, a scheme planned and replanned for forty-four years, all the rest of the German projects have been in the nature of makeshifts. Each subsequent makeshift involves fresh makeshifts in an endeavour to grab something like victory.

After that fateful fortnight in September the war of

\* Cruttwell, *A History of the Great War*, p. 26.

† Published in *Overseas*, December, 1916, p. 25.

movement in the west was replaced by trench warfare. That long line of trenches from Alsace to the Belgian coast near Ostend became very familiar to all who studied maps of the battle area. After the battle of the Aisne many of the refugees who had poured into Paris from the north-east as the Germans advanced returned homewards. The cattle and sheep that had been driven along the roads to escape the invaders were driven back. On Saturday, 19 September, the *Paris Daily Mail* made its reappearance in the rue du Sentier. When I was there in November and December, Paris had taken on a new lease of life. It was no longer a city haunted by the fear of a repetition of 1870. Even such unpleasant news as the fall of Antwerp and Turkey's entry into the war did not really shake the "Paris front."

As an Englishman acquainted with Turkey, I was nonplussed by the events that led up to Turkey's joining of the Central Powers. The Germans played their cards with great skill, and in Marshal von Bieberstein they possessed a master-diplomat. But in the nineties the British held all the cards. When I was in Constantinople in 1899, British influence was still powerful. True, since the Kaiser's visit to Jerusalem and Stamboul, Germany was known to be making every effort to oust Great Britain in the affections of the Turks. Nevertheless, I recall a conversation—no doubt typical of Turkish feeling—when my father and I dined in mess, that year, with Turkish officers in Asia Minor. Our hosts told us they considered that Great Britain was Turkey's hereditary friend, and that it would be a bad day if their country ever turned to Germany as advocated by a certain clique. I vividly remember the occasion, as it was the first time that I had ever sat down to a meal at which a whole sheep on a huge platter formed part of the menu. I described the occasion in my diary in 1899: "We sat down to a real Turkish meal and were handed our food by the officers, as in Turkey the hosts always wait on their guests. We started with a whole sheep, and as I was very hungry I

took two helps not knowing that we were to have five courses more as well as fruit!" The story of the Allied effort in the Balkans is one of continually missed opportunity.\*

The check to German plans on the Marne inclined us to minimise German staying power and resourcefulness. In November the situation was gloomy enough. Turkey had declared for the Central Powers; Cradock's squadron had been wiped out by Admiral von Spee off the coast of Chile; the battle of Ypres was dragging on inconclusively in the mud of Flanders; the super-dreadnought *Audacious* had been sunk by a German mine off the coast of Northern Ireland; the Russians had been hurled out of Eastern Prussia; and a cloud no larger than a man's hand had appeared on the Irish horizon.

In the early months of the war the nations made little use of aircraft. The first British air raid into Germany took place on 23 September, 1914, and not till the end of December was a German air raid on England carried out. Few laymen in the autumn of 1914 realised the vital part aircraft would subsequently play in the war. When six Zeppelins scattered bombs on Antwerp in October, the *Spectator* put into words what many were thinking:

At present Zeppelins and other aircraft can do nothing in the way of bombardment which is really effective. . . . Here we may say that the Germans must really be in very desperate straits if, as is alleged, they are straining every nerve to prepare a hundred Zeppelins and other aircraft to hover over London and bombard our capital from the clouds. . . . The notion that the British people are going to be frightened or awed into submission, or that in any way the course of the war is to be affected by pinpricks from the skies, is utterly ridiculous.†

When I first saw German "Taube" machines flying over Northern France behind the British lines, I thought of Wilbur Wright's words to me at Pau six years before—

\* See D. Lloyd George's *War Memoirs*, Ivor Nicholson & Watson.

† *Spectator*, October 10, 1914, p. 481.



that one of the chief uses of aircraft would be to act as the eyes of an army, and that if a war came there would be an undreamt of development in the flying arm. But I question whether even he and his brother Orville foresaw the phenomenal expansion of military and naval aircraft in so short a time. They had not reckoned on a Great War.

Early in August the layman expected that a great battle at sea would take place before long. Such was our confidence in the British Navy that we hoped for a modern Trafalgar, when our super-dreadnoughts would destroy the German would-be usurpers of Britannia's trident. It took us some time to understand that necessity demanded that the British margin of naval superiority should be kept intact so that it could exert a constant and unseen pressure upon the economic life of Germany from Scapa Flow, and that the whole cause of the Allies depended on the British Navy. The nation, however, unversed in high strategy, longed for the Nelson touch. Mr. Winston Churchill in a speech at Liverpool, said in September, 1914, to the laughter and plaudits of his audience: "If they (the German battleships) do not come out and fight they will have to be dug out like rats in a hole." At the time I deplored such words from the head of the British Navy. When the Battle of Jutland took place in 1916 the results must have been far different from Mr. Churchill's anticipations.\*

The war in the mists and mud of Flanders was a grim business. On my journeys to Paris I saw trains and motor ambulances coming down from the Front, containing poor Tommies, the less seriously hurt with heads or arms in bandages, the severe cases on stretchers. Even when there was a lull in the fighting there was the daily stream of maimed and marred human beings. The

\* "In few battles of history has the palm of victory been so long and bitterly disputed. The German claims were entirely supported by purely material considerations. Against their own losses they could set the destruction of nearly twice the tonnage and more than twice the personnel of their enemies. In technique their superiority was clear." Cruttwell, *A History of the Great War*, p. 335.

appetite of the god of war was insatiable. I could understand the patriotic fervour of the *poilu*. He was willing to die *pour la patrie*, and to a lesser extent I could understand the British soldier being here to defend the sanctity of treaties. But these "Turcos" from Africa, what were they doing here? The quarrel with Germany had nothing to say to them. A Frenchwoman might well ask when she saw the Indians among the British troops, "Do you believe that they hate the Boches very bitterly?"\* And when I first saw our Indian troops on European soil I felt unhappy. They looked so out of place. Were we justified in bringing Indian troops five thousand miles to fight our battles? True, they were well paid and well treated, but I never got over the feeling. Our forces from the Dominions came of their own free will—an entirely different matter. But in 1914 every trained soldier was needed by the Allies in France, and qualms as to the advisability of employing coloured troops in the European battle area were brushed aside. The news that the Indian troops had arrived at Marseilles caused lively satisfaction. The *Times* correspondent wrote:

How it (the Indian contingent) will immediately make its presence felt and prove of immense help to the Allies can best be realised by those who, like myself, have seen it on the march. I have been an observer of most of the European armies in peace and in war, but never have I seen troops with a finer entrain than those who swung past me on the roads in the environs of Marseilles this afternoon.

These hopes were never justified and before long the British High Command decided not to employ any more Indian troops in Europe. But ships were hurrying from other parts of the British Empire with living cargoes destined to play a vital part in the struggle, in whose coming I took a deep interest. The announcement that the first contingent of Canadians had arrived at Plymouth after a nineteen-day journey was glad tidings. The rally

\* Michel Corday, *The Paris Front*, p. 113.

of Australia, Canada, South Africa, New Zealand and Newfoundland to the aid of the Old Country, expected by those who knew the Dominions, came as a great surprise to our opponents.

### THE WAR GOD'S APPETITE FOR MEN

In the daily casualty lists the names of friends and relatives began to appear. With apprehension we looked through the closely-printed columns. One of the first names of an intimate friend to appear in the casualty lists was that of Bevil Tollemache, who lived with me in rooms in Pimlico in 1907. He wrote me on the eve of sailing with his battalion of the Coldstream Guards, in which he held a commission :

Victoria Barracks, Windsor.

I really believe I am off to-morrow. I am feeling quite thrilled at going off because the cause is right—but at the back of it all, and between you and I, it seems terribly sad that human beings should still have to fly at each other's throats. Still it seems that it is only by fighting that an end to it can be put.

Your old friend,

BEVIL TOLLEMACHE.

A month later poor Bevil was wounded and missing.

In the autumn of 1914 the major need was for men for Kitchener's armies. Northcliffe asked me to undertake the Press propaganda for the recruiting song written and composed for the occasion by Paul Rubens, "Your King and Country Want You" (published by Chappell & Co.), first sung by Miss Phyllis Dare at the Winter Garden, Bournemouth, on 4 September. Rubens—who was an old friend—and I had several meetings to discuss details. Miss Marie Tempest first sang it in London at the "Empire" on 7 September and a few days later Miss Phyllis Dare sang it at the "Victoria Palace." Prior to the first performance Rubens asked me to dine with him and Miss Phyllis Dare at Odone's restaurant for the launching of the campaign.





*Daddy, what did YOU do in the Great War ?*

*Imperial War Museum, Copyright reserved.*

A familiar recruiting poster.





## REFRAIN

“ Oh, we don't want to lose you,  
But we think you ought to go,  
For your King and your Country  
Both need you so,  
We shall want you and miss you,  
But with all our might and main  
We shall thank you, cheer you, kiss you  
When you come back again ! ”

Life became increasingly difficult, as the months passed, for the man not in khaki. In the Northcliffe Press he was portrayed by “ Poy ” as a shirker and as “ Cuthbert ” the rabbit who scuttled down his hole. On the hoardings flaming posters of Kitchener pointing his finger at him were displayed, or perhaps a picture of a happy father surrounded by his children with the caption, “ Daddy, what did you do in the Great War ? ” met his gaze. Another recruiting poster which was plentifully displayed was, “ Remember this, if you don't go willingly to-day, you and your children, and your children's children, may have to go unwillingly to wars even more terrible than this one.” In every music-hall and cinema appeals to the individual's patriotism were made. Before long a large campaign for recruits by poster and leaflet was made among British communities overseas, and I was asked by the authorities to take a hand in it. The Empire wanted every available man either on the home front or overseas.

I went over to Ireland at Christmas to spend a few days with my parents. During the South African War in 1899 we talked of “ Black Christmas.” Thirteen years later we were to get a better sense of proportion. We now knew what a black Christmas really was. The fate of the Empire was in the balance. After being in France and England a visit to Ireland, where the majority took but a luke-warm interest in the war, was depressing. In addition I was going through a period of spiritual barrenness. The light of my Faith was burning but dimly. The hecatombs of humanity were baffling. How could an all-powerful Deity permit so much suffering ? Why



should innocent human beings be asked to give their lives for objects which did not concern them? The only key to the nightmare of existence was the hope that the Armageddon now raging would put an end to war and suffering, as my friend Bevil Tollemache believed.

In England I was accustomed to the beauty and music of the Anglican service. The austerity of the Church of Ireland service left me unsatisfied. The ladies' choir sang admirably, the congregation joined in heartily. But my fellow-worshippers looked so well-to-do. The flood-tide of life seemed to have rushed by and left Killiney Church in a backwater. The fact that many of my relations had a cocksure Faith only irritated me. They had apparently never been through long periods of doubt. They seemed to be exasperatingly certain of the Almighty's intentions. Even atrocities and war horrors did not shake them. The little church was full of light. The large windows let in light on all sides. I longed for mystery. The seeking soul does not want religion that assumes clarity where there is no clarity. I thought of countless churches with stained-glass windows high up in the walls, of dimness round the high altar. A poor spiritual cripple required the props of music, incense, a lighted altar, vestments—wings to escape into the Holy of Holies. Nevertheless, I admired Quakers and low-churchmen who could pierce through to Reality without external aid.

Killacoon, Ballybrack, Co. Dublin.

27 December, 1914.

The service this morning was such a dreary one from my point of view, not a cross nor a crucifix nor candle. I longed for St. John's. All this lack of beauty over here gets on my nerves, though I know I should not be affected by externals like this. I loved the beautiful words of the psalm:

Yea, the waters had drowned us: and the stream had gone over our soul. . . .

Our soul is escaped even as a bird out of the snare of the fowler: the snare is broken and we are delivered.

Our help standeth in the Name of the Lord: who hath made heaven and earth. (*Letter.*)



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## Chapter X

1915—YEAR OF DISILLUSIONMENT

*“ After two thousand years of Mass  
We have got as far as poison gas.”*

THOMAS HARDY

WALTER HINES PAGE AND THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING UNION—  
THE U-BOATS GET BUSY—NORTHCLIFFE SPEAKS OUT—  
OVERSEAS AIRCRAFT FUND BOOMS—“ A GOVERNMENT OF  
BUNGLERS ”

# Chapter X

## 1915—YEAR OF DISILLUSIONMENT

### WALTER HINES PAGE AND THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING UNION

THE year 1915 was one of disillusionment. Optimism still persisted in high places\* but the public became increasingly suspicious of its leaders as the chain of failures lengthened. From the personal standpoint the year had two important milestones for me. The Overseas Club became a real force in promoting the Empire's war effort. Our movement was now taken seriously, and its name was known around the seven seas and on the various fronts.

My idea of starting the English-Speaking Union† took concrete shape from the day in February, 1915, on which I had a long talk with Walter Hines Page at the American Embassy in Grosvenor Gardens. Page was delighted with the idea and said, "Once this darned war is over and I quit being a neutral I will help you to get a million members for your show in the U.S.A. But while the war is on, my hands are tied. My job is to keep our folks in Washington quiet. They still do not understand that civilisation is at stake." When I first met Walter Page nine years before and on subsequent occasions, he and his partner, F. N. Doubleday‡ and I used to talk about the relations of the British Empire and the United States. I appreciated Page's lack of side and his treatment of a much younger man on a basis of equality.

Few men felt the importance of a frank Anglo-American understanding more deeply than Page. His services to

\* See D. Lloyd George's *War Memoirs*, Vol. I, p. 422.

† My original idea was to call it the Overseas Club of America. I did not select the name English-Speaking Union till May, 1918.

‡ F. N. Doubleday, or "Effendi" as we called him, was one of my most intimate American friends, and for many years we used to keep in close touch. The British Empire had no truer friend during the years of American neutrality than Doubleday. He died in January, 1934.

the cause of English-speaking friendship cannot be overestimated. There was a small but growing band that considered British-American co-operation essential to civilisation. Amongst those who felt it most keenly were Arthur Balfour, the two Lord Greys,\* Sinclair Kennedy of Boston, Moreton Frewen, Lord Bryce, W. T. Stead, Charles Wallstein and Northcliffe. I have always regretted that Page left England shortly after the founding of the English-speaking Union and that he did not live to see the fruition of the idea. Only those who knew Page's mind can understand the mental anguish he went through after the sinking of the *Lusitana*† till the United States joined the Allies. Those who loved America, as I did, went through many difficult moments in 1915. We were so close to the war that we could not understand Washington's detachment. For a time at least we felt there must be some hidden force keeping America apart from us. We knew that there was a very large section of opinion in the United States favourable to our cause, but we had no means of judging its strength.

President Woodrow Wilson's re-election to a second term of office in 1916, largely on the "ticket" that he had "kept America out of the war", was a bitter pill. We had hoped that Mr. Theodore Roosevelt stood for the real America. In the autumn of 1915 the ex-President was in British Columbia. His tribute to the British Empire and the fervour with which he spoke of the Dominions was surely the voice of America. "The people of Canada, indeed of all the Dominions beyond the seas," he said, "have advanced immeasurably in the affection and respect of the American people because of the way in which they have rallied to the support of the grand old Motherland in the hour of her trial." "Mr. Roosevelt spoke, as we knew he would speak," wrote a correspondent at Victoria, B.C., "with a burning sense of the injustice of neutrality in a war waged on behalf of humanity."

\* Albert Earl Grey and Viscount Grey of Fallodon.

† Off the coast of Southern Ireland on 7 May, 1915.

## THE U-BOATS GET BUSY

Early in 1915 Germany's proposal to blockade Great Britain by means of her U-boats was openly discussed, although many refused to believe that she would thus wantonly risk involving herself with the neutral Powers. Admiral von Tirpitz, in an interview in the *New York Sun*, stated that "German submarines might declare war on all enemy merchant ships"—evidently an inspired announcement. At first the British Press refused to believe in deliberate "frightfulness." In the event of Germany embarking on a "warfare of unmitigated murder," the *Spectator* thus reassured its readers:

There is nothing, after all, to be greatly alarmed at in Admiral von Tirpitz's idea. It could not be carried out in any effectual sense, and we dare say it will not be attempted, since at the last moment the folly of it would probably be perceived. The torpedoing of a few merchant ships and the brutal murdering of innocent non-combatants would no doubt send up insurance rates, but the percentage of losses would at the worst be no higher than the Government had allowed for when the war began.

So much for prophecy! In 1915 we little thought that two years later Germany would be sinking nearly a million tons of British shipping in a month, and that in October, 1916, Admiral Jellicoe would issue a warning that if the wastage continued, "Great Britain might be compelled in the summer of 1917 to conclude a peace very different from what she had a right to expect.\*"

The possibility of the German submarine campaign involving the United States was mentioned in the following letter a few days after my talk with Page:

87, Victoria Street,  
London, S.W.1.  
14 February, 1915.

I know how pleased you will have been about the King becoming Patron of the Overseas Club. It has been very much of an Overseas week for me and I have done and thought of little else. I lunched

\* Cruttwell, *A History of the Great War*, p. 381.

with Jim Murray Allison one day, the advertising director of *The Times*—such a nice fellow, and an Australian by birth—he has joined our Committee and is going to help me. He is the chief proprietor of *Land and Water*,\* and is making about £10,000 a year from it.

We have £22 for our Aircraft Fund, but of course there has not been time for the appeal to reach the Empire so far. I don't anticipate anything like the success we have had with our Tobacco Fund, but still we should be able to collect enough money for one aeroplane. I have rather a heavy cold, caught on my way back from Paris.† . . . I hear on all sides that the French are tremendously impressed with what we are doing and the way we have quietly worked away on our new armies. People here don't seem to fear these German submarine attacks on ordinary steamers, and as far as cross-Channel boats are concerned they would be sure to drown a number of Americans and other neutrals and then there would be no end of trouble for them. I hope the shorthorn sale will go off well and that your animals escaped U.21.‡ (Letter to Parents.)

So many of my war-time prophecies were false that it may be justifiable to draw attention to a forecast which proved to be correct :

Sandwich,  
Sunday, 21 February, 1915.

I came down here with Alan Erskine and we are staying in his little cottage. All Pegwell Bay was full of shipping yesterday, they say the steamers were all waiting for an escort of destroyers.§ And to-day a water-plane was flying about looking for submarines. I am afraid we are bound to lose a good many merchant steamers, *but unless the Germans are very careful they will certainly be getting into trouble with the U.S.A.*|| . . . I am afraid things look bad on the Russian side and I only hope the Germans will not take Warsaw,\*\* but apparently the Russians are badly

\* In those days every well-informed person read Mr. Hilaire Belloc's weekly summary of the war in this paper.

† I think my pessimism about our Aircraft Fund must have been due to my cold. We presented fifty aircraft to the Government within a year and were ultimately responsible for the presentation of several hundred. See Appendix A, p. 481.

‡ My father was sending some of his prize shorthorns to a sale in England and the German submarine U.21 was then active in Irish waters.

§ The German submarine blockade began on 18 February, 1915.

|| The wording of the letter has not been changed, but this sentence has been printed in italics.

\*\* Warsaw was captured by the Germans on 4 August, 1915.

equipped and till the ice breaks they cannot get ammunition from abroad. . . . At dinner there was Mrs. C. L., whose husband has been missing since Mons. Poor thing, she still hopes, or pretends she does. (*Letter.*)

Another letter written about this period says :

Kitchener certainly does not seem to be making himself over-popular. . . . I have seen a lot of interesting people, including some American journalists who have just returned from the German front. They all seem to think the war is going to be a very slow business. Apparently the Indians are no use at all in European warfare. I don't know what they will do with them. . . . I see there was a paragraph about the "dummy" ships in this morning's *Observer*. I wonder the censor let it pass. I have to go over to Paris at the end of the week. I expect sooner or later Northcliffe will appoint some permanent person there and I shall not be sorry except for financial reasons. (*Letter to parents.*)

Hotel Louvois, Paris.

6 March, 1915.

(Started in Pullman at Victoria Station.)

I came into this car ten minutes ago after all the fuss and bother of being examined for hidden letters. . . .

*Later.*

Two destroyers escorted us most of the way. (*Letter.*)

87, Victoria Street, S.W.1.

March, 1915.

Our losses have been very heavy. We lost 12,000 at Neuve Chapelle.\* I believe the German trenches after the bombardment were an awful sight—one man described them to me as being like "raspberry jam"—isn't it ghastly?

The Dardanelles† losses were quite expected, tho' I believe the Admiralty think it is going to be very difficult. I hear we are sending a large number of troops there.

I was talking to Northcliffe on the telephone yesterday and he still feels, as he always has, that it is going to be a very long business.‡ He told me he is making himself unpopular as he says openly what a difficult task we have got ahead of us!

\* The British captured Neuve Chapelle, 10 March, 1915.

† The naval attack on the Dardanelles took place on 25 February, 1915.

‡ Northcliffe from the early days considered we were in for a very long war. He had unrivalled opportunities for getting news from neutral countries.



Lane\* lunched with me one day last week. He has been at the Front in khaki in an ambulance detachment. He says the chief thing which struck him was how casual everything was. The peasants were hard at work in the fields and seemed to have got quite accustomed to bombs falling all round them. I hear the French Red Cross is in an awful state compared to ours. Northcliffe is going to take up an Anglo-American Red Cross scheme in the *Paris Daily Mail* to provide 25 Red Cross ambulances to go with one of the French army corps. (*Letter to parents.*)

### NORTHCLIFFE SPEAKS OUT

The financial worries inseparable from a rapidly growing movement never left me.† Although large sums of money were passing through the Overseas Club's bank account at Coutts, little of it was for our own running expenses. It was mostly earmarked for our war funds. I was very anxious to get enlarged premises where we could welcome our members from overseas and members of the Dominion Forces now coming to London in increasing numbers. Just when our financial worries were acute, I got a nice letter together with a cheque for £1,000 for furnishing our extended premises from my American multi-millionaire friend, Alexander Smith Cochran, who several times in my life came to my rescue.

Ritz-Carlton Hotel, New York.  
21 March, 1915.

Dear Wrench,

Both your letters came while I was away. I certainly do wish we could keep more in touch.

I have very few intimate friends whom one discusses ideals with as you and I are apt to do when we get together. I don't know how I missed you when in London. The Marlborough Club told me you were away and so many, in fact most of my friends, were off that I didn't question it. I will gladly furnish the rooms and I don't want any tablet except that it was done by "an American friend." I feel that I have been in at the birth of your wonderfully successful organisation.

\* Now Sir Norman Angell, then Ralph Lane.

† There has not been a year since 1910 when fate has not forced me into the position of begging for some cause or other!

How splendidly your Colonies have stood by you, and now everyone talks Empire. It's splendid.

We are in a pitiful condition ourselves and it's hard not to be actually ashamed of our lack of policy. I'd infinitely rather be like Germany fighting for ideals however wrong we may judge them than in our position.

Do write me soon again and stick at your job until a plain duty faces you about going to the front.

Yours sincerely,

ALEC. SMITH COCHRAN.

87, Victoria Street, London, S.W.1.  
Easter Sunday, 1915.

Sir Arthur Lawley,\* such a high type of man, whom I had met before and who was ex-Governor of the Transvaal and West Australia, came to see me the other day about an emigration scheme.†

I lunched with Philip Kerr,‡ the editor of the *Round Table*, whom I had not seen since that time in Vancouver when he came to our O.S. meeting. He seemed very optimistic about things generally.

There are various rumours floating round, about the number of German submarines we have captured. Some people place it as high as 17.

On Tuesday I attended a meeting of Lord Grey's Committee to deal with the employment of disabled soldiers after the war, especially on the land. I am not sure how much practical result it will have. . . . Our Aircraft Fund has begun to move a little. We have £320 so far, so I really think we should be able to get enough for one aeroplane anyhow. We have been sending a great deal of literature about the war to neutral countries through our members. . . .

Everyone speaks so highly of our hospital arrangements. There has been very little disease in our ranks compared with the French. (*Letter to parents.*)

I often wonder whether the Allies would have won the war had not Northcliffe and Lloyd George sought to counteract the prevailing unfounded optimism. Week

\* Subsequently Lord Wenlock.

† I think this must refer to the Kingsley Fairbridge scheme at Pinjarra, W. Australia.

‡ Now Lord Lothian.

after week we read in our Press that "the news from the western theatre of the war has been distinctly good. The French and the British made considerable progress and are slowly but surely gaining ground." Nothing has struck me so much in paging through the newspaper and periodical files of the early war years as this facile optimism. The wish was certainly father to the thought. We read of allied advances and captured prisoners, but we rarely heard of the devastating effects of German counter-attacks.

It has only been possible with the aid of old diaries and letters to catch the atmosphere in which we lived during the first nine months of war, before Northcliffe's attack on Kitchener and on the shell shortage. It is so easy to be wise after the event. In those dramatic days, when the issue was in the balance, we still had a wholesome awe of the brass hat. The military leaders were for the most part far-sighted soldiers who obviously knew better than outside critics. They were in possession of the facts. They would certainly not sacrifice lives needlessly, indulge in undue optimism, under-estimate their foe, nor over-estimate their own power. And yet this is exactly what many of them in all the allied countries did. In the days following Northcliffe's attack on Kitchener,\* when the *Daily Mail* was being burnt in the Stock Exchange, when advertisers were cancelling their contracts in Northcliffe publications, when friends turned their eyes away when passing Northcliffe, I saw him on several occasions. He never showed to greater advantage. He was entirely single-minded. He was not playing for his own hand. He was sincerely convinced that Kitchener was a muddler, that the great organiser of the Sudan Campaign, whom he had largely helped to create in his papers after Omdurman, did not exist, that the whole British war effort lacked punch, that most of the Cabinet were useless in the existing emergency.

\* On 21 May, on learning that Lord Kitchener was to be retained in the reconstructed Coalition Ministry, the *Daily Mail* appeared with the famous headline, "The Shells Scandal: Lord Kitchener's Tragic Blunder."

Northcliffe told me that despite the cost he knew his attack on Kitchener was justified: "I will continue to tell the truth in my papers." We talked about Kitchener, and he said European war was something very different from the warfare Kitchener had been accustomed to, that Kitchener could not depute, and that he insisted on keeping too much detail in his own hands. Northcliffe and I often discussed the veneration which is paid by the public to the occupants of high positions. I remember his telling me that as a young journalist of eighteen he went to see one of the "Mandarins of Fleet Street." With trepidation he went into the presence of the famous editor. When he listened to the great man he found that he was self-opinionated and garrulous and made of very ordinary clay. "Since then I have always been suspicious of the superman."

Northcliffe made me realise how frequently those in high places had no right to be there. New men and new methods of carrying on the war were needed. In those days the High Commands of the various nations on the Western Front were indulging in "billy-goat tactics"—hitting away the strength of their armies against unbreakable walls "in a succession of sickening thuds."\* The French, like the British, believed in the possibility of a break through, and among the incurable optimists was Joffre, the French Generalissimo, who expected the war to be over in 1915. *La guerre d'usure* had begun on the Western Front, and for many a long day the Allies duped themselves into believing that the Germans were suffering much heavier casualties than they were. Among the Allies there were, of course, dissensions. The British thought the French had let them down, while the French said that the British were ready to die "to the last Frenchman." Statements were also circulated to the effect that the English troops were not doing their share but letting the brunt fall on the Scottish, Irish and Dominion regiments. Likewise in Paris it was said, "In the French

\* Lloyd George, *War Memoirs*, Vol. I, p. 489.

Army you see Arabs, Senegalese, Indians, Belgians, and English. You even see Frenchmen.”\*

Northcliffe's policy to tell the truth at all costs got him into serious trouble. He was abused by the Government and by those who did not know how serious conditions really were. By the line of "defeatism" adopted by *The Times* and the *Daily Mail* he was held to be encouraging the enemy, to be depressing the spirits of the "home front," and still worse, "to be preventing balancing neutrals, who above all things wanted to be on the winning side," from joining the Allies. The suggestion was frequently made that the Government should use their powers under the Defence of the Realm Act in his case. There were lively debates in the House of Commons, but beyond letting off steam the members of the Government were afraid to apply drastic action to the Press Lord of Printing House Square.

The real reason the Government took no action was doubtless that the more virile members of the Cabinet, including Mr. Lloyd George, knew that Northcliffe was right in his facts. In a democracy if you want the people to make a supreme effort you must tell the truth. In order to have influenced hesitating neutrals in 1915 more was needed than words! The neutral Powers were supplied with an unceasing stream of German propaganda. But more powerful than the statements of the German Press Bureau were the facts, and the facts in 1915 were such that the Balkan nations for the most part believed that the Central Powers were winning the war.

If Northcliffe had been prevented from telling the truth the war would only have been lengthened. Outsiders see most of the game, and the neutrals in 1915 and 1916 knew only too well how badly the Allies were faring, and Russia's approaching collapse was already being discussed. I give the following extracts from letters written in the spring of 1915:

\* Quoted by Michel Corday in *The Paris Front*, p. 16.

Hotel Louvois, Paris,

22 April, 1915.

We only saw one torpedo boat just as we left Folkestone. I had lunch at the Boulogne station buffet. While I was eating it a man called — came up to talk to me. The last time I saw him was walking down the main street of Suva, Fiji, over two years ago. He has a large Rolls Royce and ever since October drives the King's Messengers from Boulogne to Abbeville.

X., looking quite fat and very well, met me at Abbeville and came as far as Amiens. He is dreadfully bored. For two months he had been practically doing nothing, just superintending his men making a railway siding, and was very glad of a talk. As we were standing on Amiens platform a German aeroplane, a Taube, soared over the town ever so high up, right above our heads. It looked rather wonderful. The French aircraft guns were trying to hit it and the shrapnel, looking like little white clouds, kept bursting all round it but it got away. Amiens is only about 25 miles from the fighting. Apparently we seem to be doing well.

Hotel Louvois, Paris,

24 April, 1915.

As usual Boulogne was humming with activity, soldiers, wounded, military trains, etc. A lot of wounded were arriving from Hill "60," chiefly shrapnel wounds in the head. Many Territorials have been going over at night all these last weeks and they expect some of Kitchener's army to start this week I am told.

Everyone here seems quite convinced that Italy is coming in by 12 May. But there have been so many rumours like this before that one does not know what to believe. I have seen many more officers and soldiers this time without arms and legs, and a great number of women in black.

The feeling against the Germans is intensely bitter and I really think it is growing here.

On Thursday evening about 20 minutes after I had arrived Lane\* walked into this hotel and dined with me. He has been down on the Riviera having a rest and is going on his lecture tour to America in 10 days' time. He says his last book has just been translated into German!

The following letter tells of the first use of gas in the war. The first German gas attack took place on 22 April, 1915. The use of "asphyxiating gases contrary to the most solemn pledges made by Germany at the Hague

\* Sir Norman Angell.

Conference" caused great indignation in the Allied countries. Sir John French spoke of the "long and deliberate preparation for the employment of devices contrary to the terms of the Hague Convention".\*

87, Victoria Street, S.W.1.

Sunday.

. . . The Germans are certainly wonderful organisers and it does look as if it is going to be a very slow business, tho' I have never had any doubt as to the ultimate result.

Coming back from Paris last Sunday was really very interesting. In the first place we passed one train full of refugees from Poperinghe, that place the Germans had just started shelling. From our train I talked to one girl who said she had lived in a cellar for three months! Then later on we passed two trains full of French wounded, straight from the north of Ypres, where the fighting had been so bad. Poor things, they looked in an awful state. They were chiefly "Turcos" who had been surprised by the German fumes. Then when I was at Boulogne a long train of our wounded arrived with a number of Canadians. They looked much battered about but much better cared for than the French. Everyone speaks so highly of our Red Cross arrangements.

Seeing just one day's batch of mails for the Front being taken up and sorted gave me some idea of the enormous task of keeping an army. All our transport arrangements and feeding, etc., are quite wonderful. No doubt due to the wonderful organising powers of Jack Cowan.

87, Victoria Street, S.W.1.

There is very little war news except that I hear over 20,000 troops have been going over every day last week. The first batch of Kitchener's Army.

Marlborough Club, Pall Mall, S.W.

16 May, 1915.

The chief piece of news as far as the Overseas Club is concerned is that I saw the Director of Military Aeronautics on Wednesday and arranged all the final details with him as regards the presentation of and purchase of our first aeroplane. On Thursday I sent him a cheque for £1,500, being the cost of "Overseas No. 1." Now that we have got one I hope that more will follow.

\* See footnote on p. 115.

On Wednesday I went to see Lord Selborne to talk over the position of his League, which was started to buy a warship to be presented by Britons outside the Empire. They set out to get £380,000, and have only managed to collect £22,000 so far! I am trying to get them to work more closely with the O.S. Club and think I shall succeed.

Yesterday morning I took Lord Grey in my car up to the Agricultural Hall, Islington, to see the Exhibition organised by the Board of Trade to show how British manufacturers are able to supply practically everything hitherto made in Germany. The British manufacturer certainly seems to be bucking up.

The war news is good as far as the French are concerned, but we seem to be badly hampered on account of munitions. But I believe the Government are at last really stirring themselves. Everybody thought Italy was coming in and I really don't see how she can keep out. I think there is bound to be trouble there internally if she does. Just as I walked in thro' the hall door here the ex-King of Portugal walked out! I expect he is glad he is not in his own country!

The Overseas Club,  
General Buildings, Aldwych,  
London, W.C.2.

10 May, 1915.

How terrible this Lusitania tragedy is. It really passes belief. Germany must be mad. I only hope we—as a nation—will keep our heads and will *not* stoop to unworthy methods just because she does.

87, Victoria Street, S.W.

Sunday, 23 May, 1915.

My great excitement has been our first aeroplane. I asked Northcliffe to come down to Farnborough to name it but at the last moment he said he could not come, at which I was much relieved in view of the feeling against him at the moment! \* I got Hylda† to come down as she has always wanted to fly. The head inspector of the Royal Flying Corps at Farnborough is such a nice fellow. I should think he is only 34 or 35 and is a Colonel! He was one of the pioneers of flying in England and used to fly his own machine.

They were all frightfully pleased about the success of the O.S. scheme and especially so when I told them that we soon hoped to be able to present a second aeroplane and as a result of our efforts Gibraltar also has decided to give an aeroplane. So that makes

\* This refers to Northcliffe's attack on Kitchener.

† Lady des Voeux, Hon. Controller of the O.S. League.



three in all. I have had a very nice letter from Kitchener and also one from Lord Stamfordham with a message from the King and these I am going to make full use of in new literature I am getting out.

Overseas No. 1 was then pushed forward. Colonel Fulton asked Hylda if she would like to fly and she said she would love to. The pilot Captain Winfield-Smith did what Colonel Fulton called "stunts" in the air and after about a quarter of an hour brought it back to where we were standing. I mean to keep the fund open until further notice and hope to get an Imperial Air Flotilla together!

Another exciting thing for me happened this week. For a long time I have been scheming to bring off some kind of co-operation with the recently-formed Patriotic League for Britons Overseas\* (the Warship Fund) of which Lord Selborne is the Chairman. Well, at their Committee Meeting on Wednesday, Lord Selborne opened the meeting by saying very nice things about me and I was elected unanimously as Joint Hon. Secretary and in future *I am to run the whole thing* at the O.S. offices! It will mean ultimately absorption by the O.S. Club. This places me in a very strong position as to patriotic organisations overseas. At present there is a little rivalry between the two bodies in some parts of the world. It will be rather funny when the local secretaries of both societies get letters signed by me.

I think Northcliffe was injudicious in the manner of his attack on K. and he should have been more diplomatic, and also he is too inclined to ride rough-shod over people, but what he says about the shortage of shells is absolutely true. (*Letters to parents.*)

## THE OVERSEAS AIRCRAFT FUND BOOMS

Cambridge Cottage,  
Coombe Warren,  
Kingston-on-Thames.

30 May, 1915.

I was tremendously bucked by Hong Kong's donation of £4,500 to our Aircraft Fund. Just think, casually coming upon a cheque for this amount in the morning's mail! I had another very nice letter from Lord Stamfordham expressing the King's thanks.

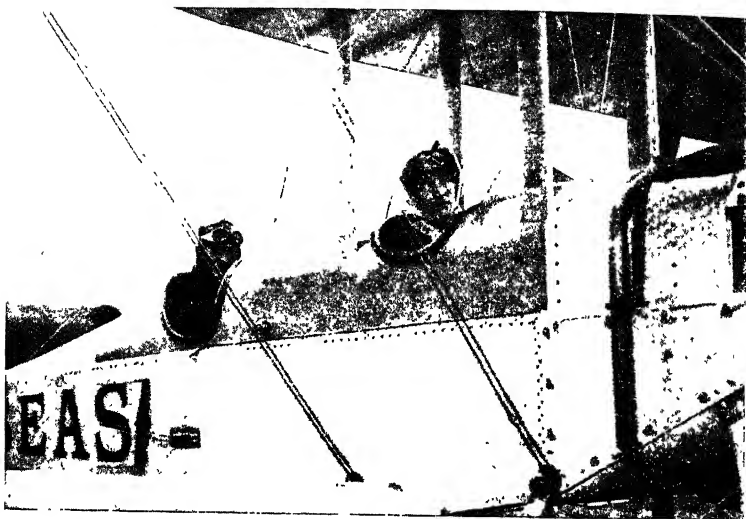
This week we are paying a cheque for £6,000 to the War Office for aeroplanes.

The storm about Northcliffe is slightly subsiding and he is as convinced as ever that he was right.† I hear Kitchener and Lloyd

\*See Appendix, p. 482.

† The Coalition Government was formed on 25 May, 1915, primarily as a result of Lord Fisher's resignation. The shell shortage was also a factor.





The first Overseas Aeroplane at Farnborough, May, 1915. Lady des Vœux being taken for a flight after the naming ceremony. Captain Winfield Smith, the pilot, was killed six months later.



Queen Alexandra at the Royal Aircraft Factory, Farnborough, July 3rd, 1915, where she named four of the aeroplanes given through the Overseas Club to the Royal Flying Corps.

George had a great row, and if Northcliffe had not brought up the munitions question L. George threatened to do so in the House. Kitchener never told any of the Cabinet about the urgent appeals for shells he was getting from the front.

I fear the Russians have been doing frightfully badly. People seem to think that Premyzle\*—I wish I could remember how to spell its name—will be retaken by the Germans.

87, Victoria Street, S.W.

June, 1915.

The Russians are having a very hard time of it and I only hope the Germans won't succeed in dividing them in two. If they do, it will mean that the war will drag on much longer. Lloyd George seems to be stirring things up wonderfully and there is no question that what Northcliffe has done has had a tremendously "invigorating" effect on the country. I am very glad you liked the Aircraft leaflets, we have sent out 100,000 so I hope they will have a good effect. I think they ought to, as everyone realises now that the war is going to be a long business.

I thought Lloyd George made a splendid speech and the country is beginning to wake up at last. All he says vindicates completely what Northcliffe said—it was only the way he said it.

The 1d. Empire Day Children's Fund is booming and amounts to over £10,000—all in pennies collected in one day, isn't it wonderful? Over three and a half million children subscribed.†

I lunched one day with Murray Allison, advertising director of *The Times*, who was rather full of Northcliffe's injudiciousness.

London,

26 June, 1915.

Queen Alexandra has promised to name several of our aeroplanes on Saturday next at Farnborough—the Aircraft Factory.

87, Victoria Street, S.W.

I was so much interested to hear F. had seen "my" film. It was so extraordinary seeing oneself walking about and all one's gestures.‡ I hardly think I should have recognised myself. I was amused at the way I moved my arms about. Queen Alexandra was as friendly as she could be and is extraordinarily well-preserved for her years. She took such an interest in everything. I had tea with her and Princess Victoria and she was absolutely simple

\* Przemyśl.

† This appeal was for our Tobacco Fund. Every child who subscribed a penny received a certificate. See p. 480 Appendix.

‡ Showing me at the aeroplane-naming ceremony.

## STRUGGLE

and unaffected. She would not eat strawberries as she said she suffered from gout! She also told me she does not believe very much in Zeppelins and that Queen A. and she had met Count Zeppelin when staying in Copenhagen. Queen A. has still a very distinct foreign accent tho' Princess V. has none at all. I expect you saw the nice letter I got from Colonel Streatfeild.

87, Victoria Street, S.W.

Sunday, 17 July, 1915.

On Thursday, Northcliffe was given a lunch at the Ritz Hotel on his 50th Birthday. He spoke afterwards and said that he intends to continue his policy of criticizing the Government till such a time as we apply ourselves as scientifically as Germany to carrying on the war. If only all this munition problem had been tackled six months ago, things would have been in a very different state.

I went to see Borden on Friday and he has promised to plant some of my maple seeds on the Canadian graves he is visiting in France this week. (*Letters to parents.*)

I received the following letter from Sir Robert Borden shortly afterwards. It refers to an idea which I had received in the first instance from Mr. Fane Sewell of Toronto.

Prime Minister's Office, Canada.

Savoy Hotel, London.

27 July, 1915.

I have learned with much interest of the idea of some Canadian members of the O.S.L. to plant Canadian maple seeds over the graves of Canadians in Flanders and France where practicable, and of your intention to arrange to plant an avenue of maples at Langemarcke after the war. The idea seems to me a very pleasing one, and I have no doubt that the relatives of all those who have fallen will appreciate your attempt to beautify the graves of those who have given their lives to the Empire. I have had much pleasure in planting some of the seeds myself.

Yours faithfully,

R. L. BORDEN.

“A GOVERNMENT OF BUNGLERS”

87, Victoria Street, S.W.1.

15 August, 1915.

Two more aeroplanes have been given. The Governor of

Sierra Leone came in to see me, which shows what these officials are beginning to think of the Overseas Club.

Two days ago Russia telegraphed to the British Government, "Alliance in great danger unless you do something soon" which looks as if they are pretty nearly exhausted on their side. The chief danger seems to be of their making a separate peace,\* but unless they are completely knocked out I personally don't think this will happen.† I think we may be in for another month or two of things getting worse and by next spring they should be getting better. (*Letter.*)

London.

August, 1915.

Northcliffe says that by far the three strongest men in the Cabinet are Lloyd George, Balfour and Carson. I believe Balfour is doing splendidly at the Admiralty. I hear our Dardanelles losses have been dreadfully heavy.

I would not be surprised if before many months are passed someone else is appointed in place of French. I believe there is great dissatisfaction with him.‡

The Russians are having an awful time of it and they will be out of it for twelve months, Northcliffe thinks. I only hope the Germans won't get to Petrograd. The Germans have had enormous losses. (*Letter to parents.*)

87, Victoria Street, S.W.

Sunday, 12 September, 1915.

All our troops are now taken over to France in small boats which only draw a few feet of water, so that they run the minimum risk against torpedoes from submarines.

On Wednesday afternoon the President of the Ceylon Association and six other people prominently connected with Ceylon came to see me formally to hand over the money for a Ceylon aeroplane.

Sunday, 26 September, 1915.

I see from the papers that our offensive has commenced. I only hope there won't be any bungling this time as there was before. We want a few victories to cheer us up. The Russians certainly seem to be doing better. One day last week the secretary of our Peking branch lunched with me. He gave a most interesting account of all the munitions pouring across the Siberian Railway from Japan to Russia. He was in Petrograd 10 days ago and said they all seemed fairly cheerful there!

\* They did not make peace till the winter of 1917.

† So much for prophecy!

‡ Haig was appointed Commander-in-Chief, 15 December.

## STRUGGLE

Sunday, 14 November, 1915.

The war news is still very serious and I don't think we can look for anything better for a long time. I think Greece's actions are most suspicious. Also I fear that it is by no means certain that Germany will not drag Persia in, as she did Turkey. And I know Northcliffe is nervous about Sweden, so we have got our work cut out. . . .

The financing of the war is the real problem now, and I think we shall all have to cut down expenses drastically. Rich people over here are only beginning to think of cutting down.

Hotel Louvois, Paris.

17 November, 1915.

I got through the Customs very quickly at Dieppe but it was five to eight before everyone was through and we did not reach Paris till 11, that is to say 14 hours from leaving London. Crossing the channel we passed two British submarines. When I got to Paris it was a lovely starlight night though freezing hard. There were no taxis so I drove in an open fiacre.

87, Victoria Street, S.W.

Sunday, 28 November, 1915.

On Thursday I lunched with Northcliffe and Lady N. and as they were alone I had a very nice talk. He knows everything that is going on behind the scenes.

I hear we are going to evacuate the Dardanelles, but that the Government hopes the fall of Baghdad will take place soon so that it can be announced on the same day! I only hope nothing will go wrong and that it will fall. I did not like the look of this last fight much and only hope the Turks have not got any unpleasant surprise awaiting us.

5 December, 1915.

I am dreadfully disappointed about the Baghdad news, only it is just what I expected from this Government of bunglers. How they could send an expedition up 600 miles into that country without sufficient reinforcements passes my comprehension. They never seem to take into account that everything may go wrong and make their preparations accordingly, as Napoleon did. I am quite convinced that sooner or later Asquith will have to go and in his place we will have to have a strong man. . . .

My armlet was given to me on Wednesday and one day I wore it, but everyone stared and as I was the only person wearing one I took it off! They ought to make the wearing compulsory, as otherwise everyone will wait for the other person to begin! It is a plain khaki armlet with a red crown on it.

“Armlet Sunday,” 1915,  
(12 December.).

I counted 20 armlets in the streets to-day, so they are beginning to be worn, though for quite a number of days I wore mine and saw no one else. I am told that the recruiting these last few days has been very satisfactory—100,000 recruits yesterday.

On Tuesday I lunched with P. and had rather a furious argument with him about Northcliffe. Most people, I am glad to say, are coming round to see that Northcliffe has been right all along and that he has tried to tell the truth when it was v. unpopular to do so.

Sunday, 19 December, 1915.

On Tuesday I lunched with the Northcliffes quietly at St. James's Place. He had been spending the week-end with Lloyd George and Sunday evening with Carson—so he is in good company! Lloyd George said the other day, “We (the Government) deserve to be all turned out.” I cannot help feeling that this Government cannot go on much longer. Everyone distrusts Asquith. Lord Derby would make a very good Premier I should think.

I see in this morning's *Observer* that Garvin now demands a change of Government. I hear terrible accounts of the Dardanelles and of our men being drowned like rats in traps in the gullys out there.

I lunched one day with Claude Johnson, the Managing Director of Rolls Royce. He told me of the new aeroplanes they are making for the Admiralty, 120 ft. long, to carry twelve or more men and a ton of explosives; and about 600 horse power. I only hope they will fly all right. (*Letters to parents.*)

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# Chapter XI

## “TOO LATE”

1916

*Too late in moving here, too late in arriving there, too late in coming to this decision, too late in starting with enterprises, too late in preparing! In this war the footsteps of the allied forces have been dogged by the mocking spectre of “too late”.*

(Lloyd George in the House of Commons, 20 December, 1915.)

UP AGAINST IT—STARTING AN EMPIRE MAGAZINE—  
NORTHCLIFFE ADVOCATES REPRISALS—SUMMER OF 1916  
—NEW HOPE

# Chapter XI

## "TOO LATE"

### UP AGAINST IT

A BOOK dealing with the War years might be accompanied by a diagram—similar to the chart hung up near the patient's bed in hospital—depicting the ups and downs, alternating between the high hopes and the deep depressions we went through.

At the beginning of 1916 the line of the chart would have taken a plunge downwards. The Empire received three heavy blows. The final evacuation of Gallipoli\* early in January was the last stage in one of the greatest failures in the history of war. In Gallipoli we had always been too late. A few thousands of troops landed at the time of the original naval attack might have shortened the war by two years.† Mr. Churchill was right in his strategic conceptions but there was tragic delay at vital moments. Lord Kitchener and Mr. Asquith must bear their share of the blame for the failure.‡

The Irish Rebellion took place on Easter Monday, 1916, and the prospect of the British lion and the Irish lamb lying down side by side in an era of perpetual peace vanished. The third disaster was the fall of Kut. The British Empire's prestige overseas was a matter which

\* From the military standpoint the final evacuation of the Helles force, three weeks after Suvla and Anzac, was a remarkable achievement. "The scheme was a masterpiece of ingenuity and its details are fascinating. The news was received in England and by the army in France with intense relief and even enthusiasm, being acclaimed like a victory." Cruttwell, *A History of the War*, p. 227.

† D. Lloyd George, *War Memoirs*, Vol. I, p. 438.

‡ On the publication of the Report of the Dardanelles Commission I wrote:—"No official document has ever so profoundly stirred public opinion. The measured sentences and the unemotional phrases of the report explain so much that was unfathomable. The cause of the greatest failure in our history is laid bare. It is almost inconceivable that at a time when the destiny of the whole Empire was in the balance, during March and April, 1915, the War Council never met! The experts were available, but their advice was never sought. . . . The one thing which stands out of the Dardanelles "adventure" is the matchless bravery of our men—soldiers and sailors alike. Gallipoli must ever be an epic of our race.—*Overseas Magazine*.

I regarded as peculiarly my own. Kut was a personal sorrow only second to the Irish Rebellion.

Great Britain never shows to better advantage than in times of depression. Twelve months later new men were in control and the British Commonwealth was preparing by new methods to counter the greatest danger\* that ever assailed it. The temperature chart of the patient was no longer soaring dangerously and Mr. Lloyd George, Mr. Bonar Law and Sir Maurice Hankey were busying themselves with plans for meeting the submarine menace by the introduction of the convoy system despite the opposition of the Admiralty.† Troops from overseas were now coming in a never-ending stream. I was frequently stopped in the street by men in the Dominion Forces recalling happier days overseas. "I was at your meeting in the Town Hall, Melbourne." "Do you remember addressing the 'boys' at a Canadian homestead at Halcyonia, Sask?" "I was one of the party that took you round the Premier Mine near Pretoria," or "I was your driver through the Buller Gorge in New Zealand."

In the whole war area there were no finer specimens of manhood than the Dominion troops. However bad the news, it was reassuring to meet these self-reliant fellow-citizens from the great open spaces of the Empire. The thought that the Empire might go under and that Germany might win never entered their minds. From the moment war was declared till Armistice Day they never doubted the result. Perhaps if the people of the Dominions could have seen the muddling in high places they would have been less confident.

Among my letters in 1916 are the following :

87, Victoria Street, S.W.

Sunday, 2 January, 1916

... What a terrible thing the sinking of the P. & O. *Persia* is—how America can go on shilly-shallying I can't conceive. You

\* D. Lloyd George, *War Memoirs*, Vol. III, p. 1,139 *et seq.*

† "The opinion which at the time prevailed at the Admiralty was that, if merchantmen were placed under convoy, then the escort would have to be twice as numerous as the ships escorted." *Naval Operations*, Vol. IV, p. 383.

probably saw that John Montagu\* is on board, poor fellow. I only hope he has not been drowned. And then the *Natal* blowing up like that the previous day, it is perfectly awful the way in which one gets accustomed to one disaster after another. Certainly Birdwood seems to have carried out the evacuation of the Dardanelles very cleverly.

I have a young Russian by name Zisserman coming to talk Russian with me two nights a week.

Sunday, 9 January, 1916.

I lunched with Northcliffe on Friday, Lady N., Rothermere and myself. N. is just as confident as ever that we are going to win, but he told us some very depressing things about the way things are mismanaged. He said the *Natal* was blown up by German spies while a Christmas party was taking place on board and a number of the officers' wives were killed. He thinks the German Fleet is bound to come out sooner or later. The food shortage in some parts of Germany is very real and discontent growing.

Hamilton Fyfe has been back from Petrograd for a few weeks' holiday and he says that on the entire Eastern front the Germans are holding up the Russians with thousands upon thousands of machine guns. All the German Eastern Army have been withdrawn from the front and have been comfortably refitting in Germany! What organisers they are! I understand the French are getting rather tired of the war. Relations between them and ourselves have been strained once or twice, especially over the Serbian muddle.

87, Victoria Street, S.W.

16 January, 1916.

. . . Yes, I paid in the 15 sovereigns and I am sure the bank was glad to have them, as one practically never sees gold in use now.†

I went down to see Steel Maitland at the Colonial Office one day last week. I gathered that the Germans have managed to get a lot of ammunition into German East Africa, so I fear that will be a fairly tough job. This ammunition has been brought in by American steamers which have managed to run the blockade. I saw Lord Warwick's son, Guy Brooke, one day at the Marlborough Club in his General's uniform. He said that at the moment our

\* Lord Montagu of Beaulieu.

† This refers to some sovereigns I had got in Ireland, the last occasion on which I ever remember handling gold currency.

## STRUGGLE

airplanes were quite outclassed by the Germans and that our losses in the Flying Corps have been terribly heavy lately, and all the new Rolls-Royce machines have been taken by the Navy.

There of course always is the fear that the allies may not stick together, but so far it certainly looks as if they would. Francis Rodd, just back from the front, lunched with me one day and he said that we are now firing off just four times as much ammunition as the Germans and that the British are all very sanguine on the Western Front.

87, Victoria Street, S.W.

Sunday, 23 January, 1916.

. . . Mrs. X. told me the details of Captain Wilson, M.P.'s capture from that Greek steamer with the government dispatches. You remember he was taken by an Austrian submarine and they got his official case with the Government documents inside. There was an American woman on board of very pronounced pro-ally sentiment. As soon as the submarine was sighted she went up to Wilson and said, "Are you prepared to trust me? If so, give me all the really important dispatches, which must under no circumstances fall into the enemy's hands." So he took the risk and gave them to her and she put them inside her dress. A minute afterwards the Austrian submarine officers came on board and arrested Wilson and his friend. Just before being arrested he threw his official leather cases overboard, in which there was nothing which really mattered and they floated off to be fished out in triumph by the Austrians! The lady delivered the documents, which were of first-rate importance, at the War Office herself.

I had a meeting of Lionel Curtis's "United Workers" who are preaching the cutting off of every possible expense. They even go so far as to say we should not drink tea or coffee or anything which comes from abroad!

I went down to see Page, the American Ambassador. He was as helpful as ever.

87, Victoria Street, S.W.

Sunday, 30 January, 1916.

I want to remember some of the things I heard from Northcliffe at lunch to-day. The Dutch journalist whose articles have been the sensation of the week, and who succeeded in dining with the Kaiser, was there. He is certainly a wonderful man.

Northcliffe has another correspondent who only six months ago spent a month employed as a workman in the Krupp factory at Essen. He says the Germans are entirely running Constantinople. Falkenhayn, the Chief of the German Staff, is the real brains

fighting us, and he is a perfect marvel. The Turks are, of course, entirely misled as regards the progress of the war, and believe we are quite beaten.

One other thing I learnt was, just think, the Dutch inventor of the Fokker aeroplane offered his invention to the War Office some time ago and was turned down. Of course he at once went to Germany!

The outlook for our prisoners in Turkey is pretty bad as food is very short there. (*Letters to parents.*)

Hotel Louvois, Paris.

2 February, 1916.

. . . Drove up to the hotel at 11.15 last night after fourteen hours journey from London in a tumble-to-pieces old horse cab, reminiscent of Turkey 20 years ago. There are no mails to London for two days. . . . There was a very painted-up Frenchwoman in furs on board with a black maid to act as a contrast!

The young wife of the proprietor of the hotel is looking very happy as her husband is just back from the Front for 6 days' leave. Just imagine what they must be feeling. . . . (*Letter.*)

87, Victoria Street, S.W.1.

5 February, 1916.

. . . I had an awful journey back from Paris. We left at quarter to eight in the morning and arrived at Victoria at 12.30 in the middle of the night—or just 17 hours. The passport formalities are endless and one spends hours standing about. We had a real bad crossing. We left Dieppe at 1.30 and got outside Folkestone at 5.30 but as there were military transports at the various landing places we were not allowed to come into the harbour till 9.30! For four hours we lay outside with a gale blowing and being rocked up and down. Most of the time we were standing in a line on deck thinking that every minute we should be allowed to go into harbour.

Paris was much more normal and quite different from the early days of the war. There were many more restaurants and theatres open.

They were all talking about Zeppelins, the damage was in the North-East of Paris in a working-class district. Paris is ever so much better lit up than London.\* I believe their air defences are better than ours.

I only wish the Government would make Northcliffe Air Minister, if he would take the job. (*Letter to parents.*)

## STRUGGLE

Peper Harow, Godalming.

13 February, 1916.

. . . I am sorry to say that Sir William Robertson, Chief of the General Staff, had to put off his visit at the last moment, as he had to go to Flanders. I should have loved to have met him as I believe he is a big man. He is the one man who is supposed to stand up to Kitchener and I believe he is appointing a lot of younger generals and officers in high places. . . . It is a marvellous morning, sun shining brightly on dewy ground and that fresh feeling in the air and a wonderful stillness except for cawing rooks—the feeling of latent life in the soil, and at the back of one's mind that tragedy in the mud of Flanders 250 miles away. (*Letter.*)

87, Victoria Street, S.W.

20 February, 1916.

. . . The Russians have certainly scored greatly by taking Erzerum. They must have laid their plans very well. It makes such a difference having been in the Anti-Caucasus and able to picture what that part of the world looks like. It certainly should ease the pressure on Kut, where poor General Townshend is. It would be dreadful if anything happened to him. I don't like the look of things there. . . .† (*Letter to parents.*)

The House at the End,

Farnham Common, Bucks.

Sunday, 27 February, 1916.

. . . I had promised to come down here several weeks ago to stay with Claude Johnson, the Managing Director of Rolls-Royce. He has always taken a great interest in the O.S. Club and has given me donations on several occasions. His firm is turning out a lot of these new large aeroplanes for the Government. He tells me that the average officer in the Flying Corps can't stand flying at the front for more than three months as his nerves go then.

Northcliffe has gone to Verdun at the invitation of the French Government. I only hope the French will be able to keep the Germans back.

We have just received the money for two more aeroplanes from the Gold Coast, £1,500 from the Chiefs and people of Eastern Krobo and £1,500 from the Head Chief, Chiefs and people of the New Juaben Settlement. It is wonderful thinking of all these natives, who a hundred years ago were practically savages, sending us all this help. (*Letter to parents.*)

\* A letter written from London on 3 February to me while in Paris said, "The Zepps are expected here to-night and a policeman has been going over the house seeing to the lights."

† Kut-el-Amara fell on 29 April, 1916.





# OVERSEAS

*The Monthly Journal of the OVERSEAS CLUB  
and the Patriotic League of Britons Overseas*

№ 1

DECEMBER, 1915.



“We sailed wherever ships could sail,  
We founded many a mighty state,  
Pray God our greatness may not fail  
Through craven fears of being great”  
*Tennyson.*



Cover of *Overseas*, the Empire Magazine, which I started in December, 1915. The cover was designed by Mr. Macdonald Gill. *Overseas* has to-day a circulation of 45,000.

28 February, 1916.

It was rather wonderful motoring up from Slough Station on Saturday evening in Claude Johnson's Rolls in the dark thro' a white silent world. It is snowing hard and everything is very still. We went to lunch yesterday with John Montagu, who was on the *Persia*. His secretary, whom I knew quite well, was on board and was drowned. At lunch I talked to her sister. John does not mind talking about his experiences at all. He was looking a good deal older. You couldn't go through all that without it affecting you. (*Letter.*)

### STARTING AN EMPIRE MAGAZINE

One of my chief tasks in 1916 was starting the monthly magazine *Overseas*. Ever since my tour round the Empire in 1913 I was determined to start a magazine to enable me to keep in intimate touch with my friends overseas. I considered that our world-wide movement should have its own publication and be independent of any outside Press support. The opportunity came at the end of 1915. By the time I had received a commission in the Royal Flying Corps early in 1917 the magazine was firmly established.

The first issue was a slender publication of thirty-two pages, that could be carried in the side pocket of a man's coat. My old friend Joseph Thorp\* got Macdonald Gill to design the cover with the picture of a galleon plunging through green and blue seas, which has become familiar throughout the Empire. Another friend, Jim Murray Allison, Australian by birth, one of the nicest men I ever knew, then advertising director of *The Times*, got me eight pages of advertising from some of the leading national advertisers.

*Overseas* summed up my ambitions for Empire Unity, but it also enabled me to preach an Imperialism which was synonymous with social service. I had been deeply

\* See *Uphill*, pp. 239-240.

Lady Wantage that evening and for over an hour tried to get a taxi but without success! So at the last moment I telephoned to say I couldn't come. I wrote to Lady Wantage telling her about it and had a message from her asking me to lunch on Thursday instead. She is always most friendly and takes such an interest in all that is going on. She told me that Milner, Austen Chamberlain and I were the three who did not turn up.

On Monday I went with a deputation to the Board of Education, about teaching Patriotism in the schools. It was got up by the Dean of Lincoln. We spent about an hour with Henderson, the President of the Board of Education, and I spoke for 5 minutes. I met Lionel Ford\* and he was very friendly.

### NORTHCLIFFE ADVOCATES REPRISALS

87, Victoria Street, S.W.

Sunday, 9 April, 1916.

. . . On Tuesday I lunched with Northcliffe, it was the first time I have seen him since he was at Verdun. Besides him and Lady N. there were Stanley Washburn, the American who is the *Times* correspondent with the Russian Army, and his wife, Arthur Lee, M.P., who is Lloyd George's right-hand man at the Ministry of Munitions, and myself.

Northcliffe told me that he had talked with the five chief generals in the French Army as to the possibility of either side ever breaking through in the West, owing to the power of defence having grown so strong, and three out of five said they did not think either side would ever break through there!

Everyone at lunch was full of the fate of the Government and did not feel that the present one could last long. Everyone seems to have lost faith in Bonar Law and I should not be surprised to see an entirely new group arise.

I fear things will go very hard with Townshend, I don't think he can last more than 2 weeks.† I fear the odds are against his being relieved, altho' I believe Sir William Robertson did tell Mrs. Townshend that he would be. The blunders in Mesopotamia are as bad as in Gallipoli.

Overseas Club matters have been most satisfactory. Our Aircraft Fund is now £100,000 and Tobacco Fund £118,000 and membership increasing all the while. . . .

\* Headmaster of Harrow and my former tutor at Eton.

† He surrendered 20 days later.

Offwell House, Honiton.

20 April, 1916.

. . . This is a very nice place, a long avenue and masses of daffodils.\* Mrs. Harrison's sister from Woolwich Arsenal, where she is a Munition hand, is here. She works twelve hours every day and till two weeks ago they did not even have Sundays off. . . .

The woods are wonderful and I picked primroses and wild violets. After dinner I got into argument with X and they all took her side, and I rather lashed out. The whole thing started by X describing the time she saw the German prisoners the other day and how she felt a feeling of revulsion from them. That kind of sentiment always annoys me and I argued on the lines that it was ridiculous to think that Germans were all black and that we were all white !

One of my bitterest experiences during the war was to sit by and hear my friends vilify the Germans. On one or two occasions, after the first bombing of Paris and London by aircraft, I got caught in the prevailing wave of detestation of our enemy's methods. But I had lived in Germany and knew the country intimately ; I knew that my German friends couldn't over-night become a race of savages. Anyhow even if a case could be made out against the German High Command in the matter of the Belgian atrocities, what had the poor hard-working, self-respecting German lads, whom I saw as prisoners in France and England, to do with the nightmare of war in which they found themselves? They were just fellow human beings caught in the cataclysm.

In 1915 I regretted that the Government did not put Northcliffe in charge of our Air Force. At that period in the war he would, I am sure, have accepted the position for which he was so well qualified. But his attacks on the Asquith administration and Kitchener made such an appointment impossible. From the earliest days of motoring and flying he had been absorbed in new forms of locomotion. His restless nature would have found an outlet for his amazing energies ; incidentally

\* I spent the Easter holiday with friends in Devonshire.

he would have become so immersed in the urgent task of developing British air efficiency that he would have had less time for attacking the Government in other directions! When he was offered the position by Mr. Lloyd George in 1917, he had larger fish to fry. He had then, I am persuaded, a mental picture of himself as the supreme director of the British war effort as Prime Minister. But Northcliffe did not realise his shortcomings. His entire lack of political experience would never have fitted him for such a position. As a relentless critic of official inertia in the early years of the war and especially in making the nation air-minded he rendered conspicuous service.

With the growing frequency of German air raids and the increasing prowess of German aircraft, Northcliffe had his opportunity of arousing the public, already losing its confidence in British leadership at home and abroad, and he used it to full advantage. Certainly in 1916 he was considering the possibility of finding himself before long in charge of the Empire's air services. In my diary of February, 1916, I find an entry: "The Chief talked to me on the telephone and said that if he took over the aircraft he would get me to work under him."

When the German air raids started I recalled the two occasions on which I had previously seen Zeppelins—on Lake Constance in 1900, when Graf Zeppelin was making his early experiments, and during my last visit to Germany four years previously, when I was staying at Bad Nauheim. In 1912 there was a daily Zeppelin service in operation between Frankfurt and Leipzig, and as we played golf on the Nauheim links the great shining silver cigar-shaped balloon used to pass over our heads. But I regarded it rather in the nature of a toy than as a weapon of war.

On the day following one of the worst air raids on London early in 1916 I walked with Northcliffe from the West End to the *Times* office. We left the roar of the traffic of Fleet Street by the griffin on guard at Temple

Bar and went by way of Temple Fountain, a place of peace in a mad world. Save for the plump pigeons and the sparrows we were alone. Northcliffe was very fond of the Temple and used to keep his father's chambers as a link with the past. We had been talking of the air raid and the possibility of future raids on an undreamt of scale. He said: "In this peaceful spot it is difficult to realise that before another two or three years are past all this part of London and all these lovely old buildings will have been wiped out. Our air defences are woefully inadequate." Northcliffe was so accustomed to publishing articles, written with a view to stirring the Government into action, that for the time being he hypnotised himself into believing their contents. He was then advocating "reprisals" to bring the Hun to his senses, a policy with which I was entirely out of sympathy. He was also engaged in helping Mr. Pemberton Billing into Parliament as an independent candidate. By every possible means he was seeking to arouse the electorate. Some of the articles which were printed in the *Daily Mail* on the subject were referred to in the *Spectator* as "injurious and inflammatory balderdash."

In a prominent column of the *Daily Mail* at this period there appeared the following letter. I cannot believe that the editor would have inserted it without Northcliffe's permission:

Sir,

Do we want to stop these Zeppelin raids? If we do, here is the remedy, let the Government announce that for every English civilian killed one German officer in our custody shall be taken to the Tower and shot; for every woman killed, two shot; for every child killed, three shot—not tortured, just humanely shot. We should hit at the class we are fighting against, and strike terror into traitor Germans here in high places, and, above all, strike at the class who are out to exterminate us. It is a mode they would understand.

But a policy of reprisals was a two-edged tool: our enemy could go one better. Anyhow, fortunately for the

national honour, the Government refused to be stampeded into a policy of "frightfulness" which advocated the punishing of innocent German officer prisoners because of "wicked orders given by the German Government or wicked acts done by German Zeppelins." Later on in the year Northcliffe was carrying on attacks in other directions.

Mr. Arthur Balfour, at the Admiralty, incurred his displeasure. He thought that the First Lord was not carrying on the war at sea energetically enough; and an article appeared in the *Daily Mail* entitled, "When is Mr. Balfour going to Greenwich Hospital?" It was acts like these which disturbed those who admired Northcliffe's drive and the energy which he threw into stimulating the Government. Who could not help deploring the methods he employed to obtain his ends? When Mr. Balfour was being trounced by the Northcliffe Press my mind flew back ten years to the time when Northcliffe received his peerage at Mr. Balfour's hands. In justification of Northcliffe it must be remembered, however, that, to him, the one essential was to win the war and to achieve that end no consideration of past favours or personal friendship was allowed to intervene.

### SUMMER OF 1916

After the depressing events of the past six months—the prospects of the Central Powers never looked more brilliant than in the Spring of 1916—the barometer of Allied hopes began steadily to mount till the late autumn. Despite previous lessons, there was another wave of optimism in the summer. Several important events combined to restore our spirits: the holding-up of the German attacks at Verdun; the capture of Trebizond by the Russian Grand Duke Michael, and the success of General Brusiloff's offensive against the Austrians—

once again the Russian “steam-roller” was rolling in the right direction; and finally, the battle of Jutland.\*

On Sunday, 4 June, the day after the publication of the news of the battle of Jutland, I wrote to my parents:

Mitre Hotel,  
Sadler Street,  
Wells, Somerset.

Sunday, 4 June, 1916.

It was terrible coming down to that awful naval news yesterday. Of course we don't know the details but we have had a bad smack in the face and I should think that everyone will insist on Jacky Fisher coming back. It also shows that the Germans have an enormous advantage with their Zeppelins.

I have no patience with the people who pretend it is nothing. It will have a greater effect on the country than anything which has happened since the war started.

Within two weeks of the Battle of Horn Reef, as we then called the naval engagement of Jutland, I had been affected by the prevailing optimism and had reconsidered my earlier views. I wrote:†

The overshadowing event of the past few weeks has, of course, been the great North Sea Battle of Horn Reef, which has once again demonstrated that the Royal Navy has lost none of its daring and courage. At first, owing to a stupidly-worded Admiralty communication, it looked as if the engagement might have been legitimately regarded by the Germans as a German victory. Fuller information, however, has put quite another light on the affair, and while the victory may not have been as conclusive as we might have hoped, yet, as Mr. Balfour remarked, it will be some months, in all probability, before the German High Seas Fleet again emerges from its protected minefields in the Heligoland Bight.

\* The original bulletin, issued by the Admiralty on Friday, 2 June, was very restrained, and was in reality a true picture of what happened—"the clumsy truthfulness of what happened" it is called by Mr. Cruttwell, *A History of the Great War*, p. 335. This authority considers that "while the comparative failure at Jutland did nothing to impair British supremacy in the North Sea, it ruined all hope of opening the Baltic to Russia. . . . Thus Jutland may be reckoned among the many converging causes which brought the March (Russian) Revolution of 1917 to birth."

† *Overseas*, July, 1916, p. 5.



These extracts are taken from letters written in the spring and summer of 1916 :—

87, Victoria Street, S.W.

Sunday, 7 May, 1916.

You must have felt dreadfully cut off not hearing for all those days and I am afraid that a number of my letters must have gone astray or been destroyed at the G.P.O.\* How extraordinary it is that within two years you should have gone through two experiences like Nauheim and then this terrible Irish Rebellion! It was wonderful the way F. kept me posted with all that was going on, I really knew much more about what was happening than almost anyone else. I sent all his letters on to Northcliffe, who I know appreciated them.

I lunched with Northcliffe and Lady N. alone. He told me that Sir William Robertson is the man who has come strongest out of all the Recruiting shilly-shallying as he absolutely stood out for the number of men he wants. Apparently Kitchener has been very weak all through and could never make up his mind. I don't think this Government can last beyond September. I believe our defences against Zeppelins are far better now in the London area anyhow.

Thanks so much for getting me the Sinn Fein stamp, it will be most interesting to have in after years.

Hotel Tortoni,

Place Gambetta, Le Havre.

19 May, 1916.

I had a special note from the Southampton Scotland Yard man to the Inspector here and got thro' in five minutes and was driven up to the station, a mile or so away, by a woman coachman. Up on the red cliffs about  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles outside there is a restaurant and from it one gets a wonderful view of the harbour and the shipping. One can see quite clearly the masts and funnel of a big steamer which was submarined here the other day.

Hotel Louvois, Paris.

21 May, 1916.

I am told night life is booming—I suppose the inevitable reaction after the horrors of the Front. . . . Lunched upstairs at the

\* This referred to the burning of the General Post Office in Dublin during the Sinn Fein Rebellion.

Ambassadeurs with two of the *Paris D. Mail* staff under branches of chestnut trees. Living in Paris for civilians is certainly very pleasant. . . . It is extraordinary the way people have settled down to war. After lunch we went for a couple of hours and watched the people playing tennis at the Racing Club de France!

Hotel Louvois, Paris.

21 May, 1916.

Paris is almost entirely normal and I am afraid very few people here are practising war economy. I heard wonderful stories of a doctor who specialises in re-making faces that have been partially blown away. My informant, who is on the staff of the *D.M.*, actually talked to a soldier whose nose, two lips, lower jaw and teeth were shot away. First he saw the photograph of the man as he was when he arrived! They cut flesh from various parts of his body and made a jaw bone out of one of his ribs! and made him a new nose which the doctor shaped out of his flesh with his own hands. . . . One is always seeing maimed soldiers walking about. They all say the losses on both sides in front of Verdun have been terribly heavy, it is inconceivable how the Germans keep it up all the time.

Arthur Lee tells me that by the end of June the Russians will be much better off for ammunition.

87, Victoria Street, S.W.

Sunday, 28 May, 1916.

I had a very interesting lunch with Sir Robert Hudson of the British Red Cross. Everyone was naturally very full of Ireland and we all hope there will be a settlement. I think the best plan will be to give Ireland Home Rule, leaving Ulster out of it. I believe both Carson and Redmond would be ready to come to terms and there may never again be such a chance of finding the Nationalists in a reasonable frame of mind.

The other day Northcliffe was shown round a museum they have at the Ministry of Munitions, by Lloyd George. One of the things he saw was a mine, or rather bomb thrower, which had been invented by an agricultural labourer! He had the greatest difficulty in the first instance in getting anyone to look at his design.

87, Victoria Street, S.W.

Sunday, 11 June, 1916.

The Russian advance has been splendid. It was badly needed as the Italians were in a very bad way, I believe, and all their big guns

have been taken. I hope Germany won't take Verdun, though it certainly looks as if she were wearing the French down. I expect it will be our turn next for an offensive. Kitchener's death has been quite overshadowed. It was very tragic, but won't affect the war at all, as all the power had been taken out of his hands long ago. On Thursday I went on a deputation to Bonar Law with C. J. Stewart, the public trustee, Philip Kerr of the Round Table, Brand and one or two others concerning a scheme for pushing War Loan overseas.

The Irish business does not look quite so hopeful but all the same it would be a great thing if a settlement could be managed. I believe the Government is very anxious to settle the Irish question so as to be on really good terms with America and also there might be a chance of getting the Pope to try and get Austria away from Germany.

The Overseas Club,

Monday, 19 June, 1916.

. . . I went down to stay with Claude Johnson at Burnham Beeches for the week. I heard a lot of war news. Among other things one of our newest Rolls-Royce aeroplanes through a mistake was taken by the pilot behind the German lines and lost to us two weeks ago.

I also had a satisfactory interview with the British Red Cross and we are bringing out a special Red Cross supplement to our magazine in August. I think it will be very good. It shows in a series of six illustrations the return of the wounded man from the trenches back to civil life, when he has been taught a trade.

The Russians have certainly done splendidly. I am told that the Austrian reserves of men are getting used up.

87, Victoria Street, S.W.

Sunday, 2 July, 1916.

. . . The big offensive seems to have started well.\*

87, Victoria Street, S.W.

Sunday, July, 1916.

. . . I lunched quietly with Northcliffe and Lady N. on Thursday. Our losses have of course been very large but I believe that the General Staff is quite satisfied and the Germans seem to have been taken completely by surprise as far as the French offensive is concerned. The Russians are also doing splendidly, but there will be much terrible fighting before we really get the Germans pushed back.

\* This refers to the Somme.

The Decoy,

Poling, Arundel, Sussex.

Sunday, 16 July, 1916.

. . . The country all round is perfectly lovely and the house is a gem. It is very old and thatched but modernised, with funny little stairs and fascinating brick paths and a little garden full of hollyhocks, sweet williams, sweet peas, and candytuft all round, and as much in the country as the farm house at Little Gidding—a field of waving corn comes right to the door.

It is such a wonderful summer morning and I am writing with the windows wide open and the sun pouring into the house. The only sound the buzzing of bees. There is such a feeling of peace.

Yesterday was a perfect day and at 10.20 Thorp and I set out for a long walk thro' the woods and over the Downs. It was very hot but very lovely. We did not get back till 5.0 and had lunch of beer, bread and cheese in a village inn.

I spent a fortnight with my parents at Sidmouth in Devonshire. We stayed in lodgings facing a wide cricket field and then the sea. I was over-tired when I arrived and the change did me good, but always at the back of my mind was the question, "Am I entitled to take holidays when the world is rocking?" Still, a very heavy autumn's work awaited me and commonsense had to be used. I envied my friends in khaki in organising jobs. When they had their leave they could take it gladly and had no qualms about it.

Sidmouth, 8 August, 1916.

I think the delay in letters from England to France is due to the coming French offensive. Went for a lovely walk along the cliffs (I noticed masses of thyme, centaury, foxgloves still out, much gorse and bracken and purple heather), along a regular Devonshire lane to Salcombe Regis with a dear little churchyard. There was the tomb of the man who became vicar of the parish at the age of 25 and remained there as vicar for 63 years, he died in 1785. Then I came across this tombstone to a man and wife who lived to an old age. He died after a long married life on Nov. 12th, 1785, and she six days later on Nov. 18th, 1785! This is part of the wording:

"An indulgent husband (He) and (She) an obedient wife,  
Struggling with declining nature, at last they end  
This life of cares and only part to meet again  
To meet in Heaven that blissful last abode .

Were mixt with angels, angels joined with God  
 This venerable pair is gone to the same quiet shore  
 Not parted long and now to part no more."

Sidmouth, 9 August, 1916.

Read Lionel Curtis's book. There was one bit I wanted to show you about Henry the Navigator of Portugal, to whom all the great discoveries were indirectly due. He built a little chapel on a headland in Portugal near his observatory where the crews used to come and receive the Sacrament before setting out on their voyages of discovery. Wasn't it a wonderful way of starting?

M. told me a very harrowing story about an Irishman who is in the Indian Civil Service. The whole thing happened 7 or 8 years ago, but I never was properly horrified by the story before. I used to know him. He was married only a few years and devoted to his wife and she was "expecting" in three months' time. They were out in India together at the time. A dog jumped up and bit her face as she was bending down to pat him. Knowing the danger of hydrophobia there he took her down to the Pasteur Institute but it took them three days from where they were. Well, at the Institute they gave her a 6 weeks' cure and on the *last* day, when they thought she was safe, she was suddenly unable to feel anything in her throat. At once he knew what that meant. The following day they read the Service together in the morning, she knowing she was going to die and that afternoon the doctor advised him not to see his wife again as it would be too painful. She died in agony on the following day and he nearly went out of his mind. (*Letters.*)

3 September, 1916.

Just think, Ethel\* saw the Zeppelins from the roof at 2 a.m. I never heard a thing and slept peacefully through it all—and she saw the Zepp come down in flames. . . .

Hotel Louvois, Paris,

Sunday, 10 September, 1916.

There was no boat for five days on account of the offensive and the wretched Tuesday's passengers were kept four days on board without being allowed to land. My friend in the Passport Department worked wonders despite 4 days' accumulation of passengers.

87, Victoria Street, S.W.

Sunday, 17 September, 1916.

. . . Everything seems to be going well and everyone in Paris was very pleased and expecting even better things during

\* Housemaid at my flat.

the next two months. There is no question but that the morale of the Germans is suffering and that the average British soldier is *convinced* that it is only a matter of months before he gets the Germans on the run, which is an enormous asset. I hear wonderful accounts of our airmen and aircraft. Excepting for the German-Bulgar offensive near Silistria which may develop, everything looks good for us. Eight hospital ships arrived at Southampton yesterday and of course we have had very heavy losses but I don't believe they are any greater than those of the Germans. The British are very popular in France just now and the *Paris Daily Mail* is doing an enormous business. Its present circulation is over 120,000 copies a day—about ten times its pre-war figure.

(*Letters to parents.*)

### NEW HOPE

Few events in 1916 gave greater encouragement—and rightly so—to the British Empire than the first use of the tanks on the Somme by the British Army on 15 September. The Germans had sprung several surprises on the Allies with their wonderful howitzers and with the use of poison gas; but now Great Britain, that had never been regarded as a military power, for her element was the sea, was turning the tables on her foes and was making the greatest individual contribution to land warfare. The employment of tanks\* greatly encouraged the infantry, although the value of the secret—so amazingly well-kept—was largely thrown away by their limited use.

87, Victoria Street, S.W.

Sunday, 1 October, 1916.

. . . I had a very interesting day with Northcliffe on Thursday. He sent for me to go down to him at Broadstairs and he was alone so I was able to have a good talk. He was five days with Douglas Haig and was tremendously impressed with him and says that at last we have found a great soldier.† The latter lives very simply and works very hard and is always ready to listen to new ideas. Northcliffe says that the whole organisation of the British Army in France now is a very wonderful thing. He has been on one of the new tanks and says it is just like being in a submarine as you go down into it! He says our men are greatly

\* For a good account of the effect of the tanks on the war the reader is referred to Mr. Cruttwell's *A History of the Great War*, pp. 270-299.

† I think Northcliffe was flattered by the attention shown him by Haig at G.H.Q.

## STRUGGLE

bucked up and have absolute confidence that sooner or later we shall get the Germans on the run. He lunched with Briand, the French Premier, who also believes in Douglas Haig, and said to Northcliffe, "Sir Douglas 'Aig est le seul général qui fait ce qu'il dit!" and even Joffre leans on him. Northcliffe says Cadorna, the Italian Generalissimo, is also a big man and reminds him of Pierpont Morgan; also that the King of Italy is a very nice little man. Altogether Northcliffe was very hopeful.

It is splendid about the 2 "Zepps" yesterday. We certainly are getting our air service much better.

87, Victoria Street, S.W.

Sunday, 1 October, 1916.

I was talking to one of our members who was wounded on the 15th at Flers. (Out of his battalion there were only 140 left in the evening!) But he said it was a great day and they had several tanks quite close to them. He said one of their chief advantages is the confidence they inspire in the men. His regiment moved up to our most advanced trenches at 11 p.m. the night before the attack—the attack was at 6 a.m.—and while waiting all that night they had nothing hot to drink or any special food, beyond what they carried in their knapsack. I asked him if he did not feel rather uncomfortable that last night waiting, and he said "No," and that he slept quite soundly! I think the only unsatisfactory part of the war is the Eastern side.

I had to go to see C. F. G. Masterman, who is at the head of the Government Propaganda Dept., one day last week and he was most friendly and said they were very grateful for what the O.S. Club had done, and he had given us a page in a special confidential memorandum to the Cabinet on the work we are doing for them.

87, Victoria Street, S.W.

Sunday, 19 November, 1916.

On Thursday I dined with the Erskines. They had a Rumanian and a Russian officer. The former was very depressed about the situation in his country and I believe cholera is rife and they have no "serum"! And it takes such months to get ammunition to them.

87, Victoria Street, S.W.

Sunday, 3 December, 1916.

. . . Everybody over here is much excited about the political situation. I think there is bound to be a small War Council of 5. I should like to see Lloyd George, Carson, Northcliffe and Milner included. If we allow things to go on drifting as they have been lately, we shall lose the war. (*Letters to parents.*)

Serious though the situation was at the end of 1916 after the knock-out blow Germany had given to Rumania ; with the alarming weekly sinkings of British ships by enemy submarines ; with the enormous losses on the Somme ; with the ominous rumours which were reaching us from Russia—the dawn was breaking. A new government, pledged to use new methods and to mobilise the Empire's utmost resources, was now in power. On the formation of the new Government under Mr. Lloyd George I wrote :—

We have been living in a state of political turmoil. After several days of uncertainty, Mr. Lloyd George emerged triumphantly, and on 10 December the composition of the new government was announced. At one time it was thought that Mr. Asquith would return to office ; later on that Mr. Bonar Law would be our new Premier. It was only when the placards of the evening papers announced that the Labour Party had agreed to throw in its lot with Mr. Lloyd George that his success was assured. . . .

The formation of the new government is a great personal triumph for Mr. Lloyd George, and judging from the cabled comments the Empire as a whole regards the new Prime Minister as the one man who can pilot us to victory. Four years ago when I was visiting the Dominions, I found that Mr. Lloyd George was everywhere regarded with confidence and affection. His services in introducing Old Age Pensions were especially remembered. The task which he is undertaking is a stupendous one—only a man with the stoutest heart would shoulder it. The Empire believes in Mr. Lloyd George, and it believes that he will win out.\*

28 December, 1916.

Mr. Basil Clarke, the War Correspondent, wrote to *Overseas*, in November, 1916 :—

I have just had a month of the Somme. . . . I went there moody, uncertain, almost down-in-the-dumps as to British fortunes of war, and I came back home, after only one month among our boys on the Somme, elated, bubbling with optimism ; certain of this : we have at last started the enemy fast on the down grade towards defeat. . . .

Till 1 July the enemy were in a winning mood, playing a winning game and playing it hard and well—28 December, 1916 the day

\* *Overseas*, January, 1917, p. 26.



this is penned, sees them a beaten team; worn, winded, down-hearted. . . . More than 120 German army divisions passed through the maelstrom of fire we put up for them on the Somme. That maelstrom was such as to strike terror to the hearts of the hundreds of thousands of German soldiers who passed through it. Nothing more ghastly than the German sufferings in those days of hellish and ceaseless bombardment and attack has happened in warfare. Men, quite uninjured, went mad with it. . . . The Somme mud is like nothing on earth. The Red River mud of Canada is pretty famous, as I myself can testify, but it is "easy going" compared with Somme mud. . . . Uninjured men will sink and die in that mud. Poor lads have stood in it till they fainted and then dropped and died. It is appalling. . . . Our boys' task is difficult, but Fritz's task is well-nigh impossible. So convinced am I of this that the end will come before Autumn 1917—if only we buckle to and put in every ounce of our weight.

A year later came Passchendaele.

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# AN IRISH INTERLUDE

# Chapter XII

## MOTHER IRELAND

MY GRANDFATHER'S HOME IN CO. LOUTH—LOVE AT FIRST  
SIGHT

## Chapter XII

### MOTHER IRELAND

#### MY GRANDFATHER'S HOME IN CO. LOUTH

IRELAND has played such an important part in my life that it must have a section to itself. If any work that I have been able to do towards the promotion of unity among nations has been of value I owe it to my Irish upbringing. It taught me lessons about sectional antipathy that I have never forgotten. I made two separate attempts to help towards an Irish settlement in March, 1917, and in August, 1919! Neither attempt met with success but they gave me added knowledge of the difficulties and failed to shake my belief that the problem is soluble.

I do not know how much pure Irish blood runs in my veins, but it cannot be very much. In our family we have always thought there must be some foreign strain. Several of my mother's relatives had Spanish features. My cousin, Arthur Maddison, for a quarter of a century Canon of Lincoln Cathedral, an authority on genealogy, failed to find any foreign ancestors. My father was English but had some Scottish forbears. No one could have mistaken him for anything but a Sassenach. My mother was not more than a quarter Irish by descent, although she was born and brought up in County Louth. Her father, Sir Alan Bellingham,\* had an English mother. My maternal grandmother was a Mrs. Clark, the wife of a banker at Boston in Lincolnshire. At most then I can claim to be one-eighth Irish and yet I frequently feel more Irish than English. Mother Ireland exercises a spell over her children that can never be shaken off. There is something in the atmosphere of Erin that makes

\* One of my ancestors, Richard Bellingham, was three times Governor of Massachusetts.

Anglo-Saxons love her. Although I have lived in England for thirty-five years Ireland is my first love and I am still under her spell. I wish I could think that some day I might be called in to help in settling the age-long Anglo-Irish misunderstanding. In Ulster and in Southern Ireland I feel equally at home. When in the North I find myself trying to champion Southern Irishmen and in the South explaining my fellow Ulstermen. I admire and respect many of the Ulster leaders, and Southern Irishmen like E. de Valera, the late Arthur Griffith and W. T. Cosgrave. Perhaps my upbringing in Fermanagh has enabled me to see "the other fellow's standpoint" so wholeheartedly that sometimes I find that I am almost taking sides against myself. It is an uncomfortable state of affairs!

In the early war years I was perplexed by Ireland's indifference to the allied cause, and in one of my non-Irish phases I wrote on Christmas Day, 1915:—

Killacoona, Ballybrack,  
Co. Dublin.

Arrived at Kingstown at 5.30 where father met us. I felt so numb and out of sympathy with the country, they don't in the least realise about the war and here at Killacoona there are four men—in stables and garden—who ought to be making munitions, and it is the same everywhere else. Ireland's war effort is not to be compared with that of other countries and the contrast with what I saw in France last month is amazing, but then, of course, the French are on their own territory which makes all the difference.

From the date of his arrival in Ireland at the age of twenty-one, when he became a land-agent, my father identified himself with the landlord point of view. My parents represented the old landlord class. They loved Ireland, they were "loyal" to Ireland as they conceived it ought to be—a feudal state in which the Protestant and property-owning class ran the country. Inter-marriage between Catholic and Protestant was frowned upon. The bitter feeling in my mother's family towards the





An Ancestral Link with America. Richard Bellingham, who was three times (in 1641-1654-1665) Governor of Massachusetts. From the picture at Castle Bellingham.

Catholic Church\* was increased by the conversion from Protestantism of my uncle, Henry Bellingham, my grandfather's heir, while at Oxford. Only those familiar with the outlook of the landlord class in Ireland in the nineteenth century can appreciate the consternation which this conversion caused in the family. My grandfather never got over the blow. When Miss Slade became a disciple of Mahatma Gandhi she can have caused no greater consternation.

Up to her eighty-sixth birthday my mother had still got a very clear picture of her early Irish and Lincolnshire background and I have spent many happy hours listening to her recollections. Alan Bellingham and his children led a peaceful patriarchal existence at beautiful Castle Bellingham, and in the summer months at Dunany House on the sea, facing the Mourne Mountains. The day started with family prayers at which my grandfather presided. The domestic staff was seated on two long benches, the men on one side and the women on the other. Breakfast was at 9.0, lunch at 1.0, and dinner at 5.0, and a "dish of tea" and cakes were served at 9.30 p.m. Although a disbeliever in a meat diet I have to record that till his death at the age of eighty-nine my grandfather ate a small chop for breakfast every morning of his life. It was like the laws of the Medes and Persians to him.

I well remember my grandfather:† a little old man with a white stubbly beard, rather awe-inspiring, with large sunken eyes and a big nose. He wore a little black skull cap indoors. When he went out he put on a top hat and a black cape that came down nearly to his knees. With his pockets filled with crusts from the breakfast table, for the farm horses, he set off on his daily rounds on his pony. He had some odd fads. He did not like the cool feel of the knife handles so he asked my grandmother to crochet little covers for them—these

\* "Catholic" in Ireland connotes Roman Catholic.

† I was six when he died.



he always used. He was conservative in his ways, and extremely generous. His left hand never knew what his right hand did. According to his lights he more than fulfilled the duties of landlord and head of a large household in that state of life into which it had pleased God to call him.

In the middle of the nineteenth century the fetish of the daily bath was unknown. Great excitement was caused in the neighbourhood when Lady Eliza McClintock brought over a tin "saucer" bath to Ireland. There was no bathroom in my grandfather's house when my mother was a child. Saturday night was bath night—in a hip bath. In her youth my grandmother put on a calico nightdress when she had her bath—doubtless her own naked form was no sight for a well-brought-up maiden. But even in my mother's childhood a seemly modesty was the order of the day. On one occasion in getting over a fence my mother unwittingly got her skirt entangled and displayed a comely limb below the knee. The family governess, Miss Crit, was greatly shocked and said, "Come now, come now, Charlotte, ladies should never show anything above the ankle."

Model parents though they were, my grandfather and grandmother were strict disciplinarians. On one occasion my Aunt Hester\* walked across the passage in her petticoat bodice and the governess made her hold out her hand and chastised her with a ruler, which was called by the children being "pandied". One of my mother's earliest recollections, at the age of five, is of my grandmother asking the governess:

"Has Charlotte shown any signs of repentance?" My mother could not remember what was the nature of her youthful iniquity, but on the governess replying in the negative my grandmother took her upstairs and beat her with a whip. She was once put into Coventry by parental decree for three days because she had said "What?" in reply to some remark of her elders. On

\* Lady Butler of Ballintemple, Co. Carlow.





Castle Bellingham, County Louth, where the author's Grandfather lived and where his Mother was born.



The author's Grandfather.



Frederick and Charlotte Wrench  
after their marriage.

another occasion, my Uncle Claypon\* then aged six, was picking some rough skin off his chapped lips. "Stop picking your lips, Claypon," said my grandfather sternly. Poor struggling Claypon was led off by his papa into the library. With doors purposely left open, so that the other children should see what happened to wicked boys, he was laid on the table and given a sound whipping—presumably with the same whip with which my mother was acquainted!

The ordered existence of the week changed on Sundays. All weekday books, and needlework, were put away and works on religion and Holy Writ were studied. My mother picked up a book on the schoolroom table on a Sunday and finding the word "God" in it knew it was suitable for Sunday reading! The long service in the little church in the garden was the chief event of the day. My mother and her sisters† used to be escorted to church by a page-boy in buttons. He carried the books of worship for the family in a square basket. On arrival at the church he walked ahead and carefully laid the prayer-books and hymn-books in the family pew. When my mother talked of her childhood I was back again in the pages of a Jane Austen novel.

In his early youth my grandfather, who was born in 1800, kept a horse at Holyhead. When he went to visit relations in London or Lincolnshire he rode there. When his uncle, Sir William Bellingham,‡ died, my grandfather was in London and he rode the whole way to Holyhead with the funeral *cortège*—a journey lasting a week, as the procession went at a walking pace through the villages and towns.

In her early childhood my mother remembered a certain blue carriage—a kind of barouche—used for important calls on neighbours. It only held two passengers, and a

\* Rev. Claypon Bellingham, a very devout man, became a clergyman in the Church of Ireland, which slightly atoned for his elder brother's conversion to Rome. My uncle must have been a very advanced child. He could read at three, when he was put into the school room.

† My aunt Agnes, Mrs. M. Yeats Brown, is still alive. She is eighty-three.

‡ Sir William had been a member of Parliament and private secretary to William Pitt. His wife was acquainted with Dr. Johnson.

footman in breeches and white stockings stood on the board behind. Perhaps my mother's most interesting link with the past was the fact that she remembered a certain Miss Patty Gee of Boston in Lincolnshire who used—in 1853 or 1854—to go out to dinner by sedan chair. As children the Bellingham family went frequently to Boston to stay with their maternal grandparents. Mrs. Clark was held in great reverence by my mother and her sisters. When annoyed with a grandchild she would exclaim, "You nasty detestable little thing," and simultaneously would thump their heads with her heavily ringed hands. My mother recollected being taken as a child of three and a half to the Chapel-of-ease at Boston for a memorial service to the Duke of Wellington. On getting back to West Skirbeck Hall she had dinner with the housekeeper, who said, "Even little Charlotte was impressed by the sermon."

In Ireland the children led a quiet life: their nearest neighbours were five miles away. Hunting with the local foxhounds or an occasional day's expedition to lunch with friends eleven miles away were red-letter occasions. The family never associated with Roman Catholics, except of course with the tenantry or farm hands on the estate. In the summer my grandfather was enlightened enough to encourage sea-bathing at Dunany, and the five girls used to don "thick navy-blue flannel garments like night-gowns," in which there can have been little freedom for their limbs. Till the age of eighteen the children were not allowed to read newspapers. The nearest they got to examining the contents of *The Times* was in a highly unorthodox manner. In place of toilet-paper in the school-room lavatory their nurse used to cut up discarded copies of *The Times* into squares for the use of the children! It must have been tantalising to start reading of some current event only to find the story torn through at the interesting point.

*The Pilgrim's Progress*, *The Swiss Family Robinson*, *The Fairchild Family* and, of course, Dickens, were the staple

diet. My grandmother used to read out Walter Scott's novels to her family, "skipping all the nice bits including the love scenes."

### LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT

Stories of love at first sight with a happy ending are good to come across in an age that regards the possibilities of happy marriage with scepticism. My father, the only son of a Kentish parson,\* after leaving Haileybury went to Exeter College, Oxford. His greatest friend was Henry Bellingham,† who invited him to dinner to meet his sister Charlotte. My father must tell the story in his own words :

On the last evening of the summer term in 1869 I was dining with an Irish friend whose father owned one of the prettiest places in Ireland or anywhere else, Castle Bellingham, Co. Louth, with a neat village at its gates and a picturesque salmon river running past the house. When I walked into the room Bellingham introduced me to his sister, who was going over to Ireland with him the next day, and by whose sweet face my fate was sealed. I spent a delightful evening hearing about the endless attractions of Ireland, and from that moment I determined to look for some profession in that country.

The young couple fell head-over-heels in love. They were nineteen and twenty. My grandfather naturally refused to hear of immediate marriage. The penniless young Englishman with no prospects must first of all get a job before obtaining his daughter's hand. For two years, considering themselves hardly used, the young couple were made to wait! They were married in February, 1872. Their happy married life lasted fifty-four years till 1926, when my father died at Hythe, Kent,

\* The Reverend Frederick Wrench, for thirty-five years rector of the parish of Stowting, Kent. He was the son of Jacob George Wrench, merchant of the City of London and Master of the Drapers' Company in 1828. He married Mary Buxton.

† This was before my uncle's admission into the Church of Rome.

within seven miles of the village of Stowting, where he was born and where he and my mother are now laid to rest. For over fifty years he lived in Ireland and no one could have worked more devotedly for its economic well-being. He had little sympathy with the growing nationalism. If Scotsmen and Welshmen were willing to be British subjects and sing "God save the Queen" with fervent loyalty, why not Irishmen? The heresy of Irish Republicanism, financed by Fenian malcontents in America, was beyond the understanding of his generation.

Was it surprising that Charlotte Bellingham's heart went pit-a-pat when Frederick Wrench came down to family prayers during that first visit? Tall, with curly black hair, a fresh complexion and blue eyes, my father was one of the best-looking men I have ever seen. They made a very good-looking couple. My father had all the enthusiasm of youth and took readily to Irish life. He wrote :

A friend recommended me *Realities of Irish Life* by W. Stewart Trench, a noted land agent whom I visited afterwards at Lord Digby's residence Geashill in King's County. There I had to show the stuff I was made of in a famous ride with Trench and two of his pupils straight across country, and I well remember that a broken iron gate was one of the obstacles we had to encounter. Trench was riding a raw-boned chestnut, over 17 hands high, that simply sailed over all the fences. Ever after that first ride Trench was friendly to me.

My father was proficient at almost every form of sport ; he was devoted to horses and cattle and was never so happy as when he was assisting, either as judge or exhibitor, at some local show. In my early youth I attended so many horse and cattle shows that I must have got a complex about them—my tastes lie in other directions. From the moment he arrived in Ireland my father, as a land agent at Clones, where he was agent to Sir Thomas Lennard, had unequalled chances for indulging in sport. There was excellent snipe shooting over the low-lying flooded marshes of County Monaghan.



“Great Mo.”

My Great-grandmother. She rapped the bare head of her small grand-daughter, my mother, with her ringed hand saying : “Charlotte, you nasty, detestable little thing.”





The following account is taken from my father's diary :

Before I got into the knack of snipe shooting I blazed away a good many cartridges, but soon I became an expert and rarely came home until I had accounted for 10 couple. My best performance was 27½ couple one day before 2 o'clock, when I had exhausted all my cartridges. My snipe-shooting attendant, to carry my cartridges and the birds when they were shot, was selected on account of his marvellous powers of jumping big drains, of which there were many, and his knowledge of boggy country !

He was the huntsman of the local hounds, a well-bred lot, they all lived singly in the peasants' houses. On a hunting morning my friend went to the top of a hill, just behind his house, and blew a horn, and you could see the hounds streaming from every house near by, keen on a day's sport.

Few Irishmen knew West and Southern Ireland as well as my father. When he was appointed an Irish Land Commissioner in 1887 his work took him to all parts of the country. Mr. Arthur Balfour was then Chief Secretary and a warm friendship started that lasted all his life. When Mr. Balfour founded the Congested Districts Board in 1891 he drew much on my father's intimate knowledge of the West and on several occasions my father and Mr. Balfour made tours of the Congested Districts by jaunting car.

As a boy I was taken on some of my father's tours of inspection. I have vivid recollections of thirty or forty mile drives in outlying parts of Connemara, away from railways, seated sideways on an Irish car in drenching rain, wrapped up in a tarpaulin ; and at the journey's end, with a rick in the neck and a numbed body, being helped off the exposed seat to a house with a hospitable turf fire and the eagerly-awaited meal of the inevitable chop, Worcester sauce and potatoes.

For thirteen years my father was the official representative of agriculture on the Congested Districts Board.

He thus described the programme of the C.D.B. :

To improve and consolidate the holdings and, where necessary, to build new houses trying that to arrange the pigs and poultry

should not in future share the living room with the human inhabitants. To improve the cattle, pigs, ponies and poultry and all the live stock, and introduce a better system of packing and marketing eggs.

It was in search of new and up-to-date methods of agriculture and of suitable strains of livestock to improve the local Irish breeds that my father travelled through much of Europe. On these journeys he took his family and to these tours of investigation I owe my acquaintance with many out of the way parts of the Continent.

No boy interested in life could have had a more stimulating childhood—a splendid training in tasks of administration and problems of government. I obtained my first realization that life on the land was not the pleasant existence it is often pictured by town-dwellers. The peasants had a grim struggle with nature in the wilds of the West. A peep into that life has been given to the outside world in Robert Flaherty's great film "Man of Aran." I have previously described the joyful days I spent as a boy home from school on the C.D.B.'s comfortable steamer *The Granuaile*.<sup>\*</sup> In her my father visited the *ultima thule* of Western Ireland "so that we thoroughly knew our territories, which consisted in many cases of wild, rarely visited, islands in the rough Atlantic."

Even Mr. de Valera, who loves the land of his adoption so passionately, could not have worked more consistently for Ireland's welfare. My father took sorrowing to the grave the thought that the Ireland to which he had given fifty years' service could prove so ungrateful and turn upon men like Horace Plunkett. Whatever England's handling of Ireland from the days of Elizabeth onwards may have been—and my father, like many of the Irish Unionists, minimised some of the dark pages of English misrule—the predominant partner was sincerely seeking to make amends since the eighties and help Ireland to a new era

<sup>\*</sup> I think my father was largely responsible for naming the steamer *The Granuaile* "after the Irish Queen of that name, who visited Queen Elizabeth without shoes or stockings, to which she had never been accustomed. The remains of Granuaile Castle are still to be seen on the rocky coast of Clare Island" (*my father's account*).





My Father enjoyed taking snap-shots. Here are two from Connemara thirty years ago.

of prosperity. The factor he failed to realize was that good government was no substitute for self-government and that control from the Irish Office in Old Queen Street, London, was unsatisfactory. If he had studied the history of the evolution of self-government in the British Dominions, as I sought to persuade him to do, he would have recognised that some form of home rule was inevitable. But his whole life was devoted to practical tasks both at the Irish Land Commission and at the Congested Districts Board.\* At the former he and his colleagues† were engaged upon the great work of enabling the poor Irish peasant to become his own landlord on favourable terms.

At the Congested Districts Board he was engaged on the fascinating task of dealing with the submerged sections of the population, living on the borderline of starvation. While he was seeking out new breeds of horses in the government stud-farms of France, Germany or Russia, larger donkeys in Spain, better pigs in Hungary, or attempting to develop new industries,‡ or studying improved methods of curing fish, packing eggs, distributing produce, or encouraging village industries, such as lace making and weaving cloth, other Irishmen were devoting their lives to the task of breaking away from "England—their oppressor."

On many occasions I went with my father into the hovels of the poorest peasants. I once saw a child lying asleep in a cottage with its head on the body of a fat somnolent pig. My father thus records a visit to a typical peasant's house in the congested districts :

On this occasion Mr. Burdett-Coutts§ accompanied me.

\* After George Wyndham left Ireland, and especially under the Birrell regime, my father was out of sympathy with the political drift in Ireland and did not work with his early enthusiasm.

† There were three Irish Land Commissioners, Mr. Justice Bewley, Mr. Gerald Fitzgerald and my father. The first named was slightly deaf, the second was said to be obstinate and my father was frequently travelling. Some wit thus described them :—"One Irish Land Commissioner can't hear, one won't hear and the other is never here!"

‡ My father persuaded Messrs. Morton of Carlisle to establish a carpet factory in Donegal.

§ The husband of Baroness Burdett-Coutts.

Baroness Burdett-Coutts had been a generous patroness of the Kinsale fishermen and was well known in Ireland for her charitable interest in the fishing industry, and he was keen to see something of the Congested Districts and of the Connemara ponies in particular. We had a most interesting trip among the people in the districts where the best ponies were bred, and on all sides were told of a wonderful pony stallion that we ought on no account to miss, as he was the "rale Irish sort" and a great sire.

We had some difficulty in ascertaining where he was, but at last were pointed out a long low house on a hill top. On reaching our destination we knocked at the door, and walked in. The house was so full of peat smoke that at first we could see nothing. Three old ladies were crooning over the fire, apparently they could talk nothing but Irish. Fortunately a neighbour, who had seen us approach, came in and asked us who we were and what we wanted; when I explained, he was greatly amused and talked to the old women.

They owed some money to a gombeen man and thought that we were the bailiffs come to seize their belongings, and when they found out that no seizure was in our thought they greeted us warmly and talked their indifferent English quite volubly. Then I asked them where the pony was and if I could open the two doors, opposite to each other, to let out the smoke.

After nearly tumbling in the gloom over the manure heap, inside the house, on my way to the door, I bumped into the pony almost at my side. He was tied to the foot of the family bed, with a most ingenious crib for his food; just behind the head of the bed the fowls roosted close to the fire, the pigs wandered about where they liked, and at the foot of the room there was a regular rough cow byre. The house consisted of just this one long room of a good size and was capable of containing all the livestock on the farm as well as the family. This one long room was divided into two halves by a diagonal path in the centre connecting the two doors, back and front. This was typical of very many houses at that time, where the only possible means of ventilation were a good big chimney and the two doors, the windows, which were small, not being made to open.

I have studied conditions of land tenure in most parts of the world and I am convinced drastic legislation is required in Great Britain to resuscitate our derelict countryside. I have witnessed the miracle which Land Purchase has achieved in Ireland.

The last chapter in my father's half-century of service to

Ireland was as Food Controller during the war. He was appointed by Mr. H. E. Duke, the Chief Secretary, and he regarded his year as Food Controller as "perhaps the most strenuous and happiest year of my life." On his appointment he stipulated that he should have an entirely free hand and that he alone should have the selection of the staff.

And there I must leave the account of my father's work for Ireland, which I think was never properly recognised. I regret that he identified himself so completely with the Unionist Party. I wish politically he could have been more detached. But no Englishman ever loved Ireland more than he did. In his fifty years of Irish life he never had any difficulty in getting on with any Irishman. His friends were to be found in all walks of life—landlords, tenants, civil servants, horse copers, farmers, policemen, old furniture dealers, jockeys, gamekeepers and cowherds.

I hope the day will come in Ireland when just tribute will be paid to all who have devoted their lives to her service. His record refutes the too prevalent belief that it is only by the gun that Ireland can be served.

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# Chapter XIII

## MY IRISH BACKGROUND

A YOUTHFUL COURTIER—CHANGING VIEWS ON IRELAND

## Chapter XIII

### MY IRISH BACKGROUND

#### A YOUTHFUL COURTIER !

PERHAPS one day when Mr. H. G. Wells has some spare time he will write an *Outline of Racial Prejudice* as a companion volume to his *Outline of History*, and explain in his lucid manner how our various racial and religious antipathies and complexes arose. Why should the accident of birth decide the whole mental outlook of a human being? Unfortunately, there are no Norman Angells standing at each cross road to point out where the unseen assassins are lying in ambush. From our earliest life we are nurtured on prejudice. Unless endowed by Providence with exceptionally clear mental powers we unwittingly accept as part of the established order and inevitable, circumstances in our environment which could be changed had we but the wit to try. Great illusions assail us from the cradle to the grave.

I was born into the "Orange" world at Brookeboro', Co. Fermanagh. King Billy of sacred memory was our deity, and the Roman Saints, Martyrs and Hierarchy were anathema to us. I first discovered St. Francis of Assisi for myself at the age of twenty-seven, and in giving my allegiance to him I felt as if I were eating forbidden fruit, for was not Il Poverello a Roman? In the Ireland in which I was brought up, Dublin Castle and the Kildare Street Club stood on one side and the majority of the Irish people on the other. No doubt the Irish landlords had the welfare of their tenants sincerely at heart. On one side of the scale was the landlord on his great estate, with a subservient and dependent tenantry, and leisure to indulge in hunting, shooting and fishing, and with money to send his son to be educated in England. On the other the poor tiller of the soil, who all his life was

carrying on a bitter struggle to earn enough money to pay the rent. Alexander II emancipated the serfs in Russia in 1864: the charter of Irish agricultural freedom was the passing of the Irish Land Act. The Irish tenant lived a hard existence, not perhaps as hard as the Russian *muzik*, thanks to the milder climate of Ireland, but his lot was far from enviable. His diet consisted of porridge, buttermilk, potatoes and butterless home-made bread. A baker's loaf or bacon were regarded as luxuries. May and November, when the rent became due, were anxious months. Protestant and Roman Catholic farmers were friendly neighbours but once the field of politics was approached they were at daggers drawn.

When I look back on my childhood in the eighties it seems as if I lived on another planet. That Ireland is no more. It belongs as much to another age as the stage-coach. Ireland was certainly a happy country for the gentry and professional classes. The first Roman Catholic priest that I ever remember meeting was the famous wit, Father Healey, who was asked to our home by my father. He made himself popular with us children by giving us silver fourpenny-bits, then becoming a rarity. Other "Papist" friends were Max Green, John Redmond's son-in-law, and my father's colleague at the Irish Land Commission, Gerald Fitzgerald, who for a time was one of the few Roman Catholic members of the Kildare Street Club.

The two great events in the year were the Cattle Show in the spring and the Horse Show in August at the Royal Dublin Society's grounds at Ballsbridge. Sport was the one bond that enabled Irishmen to forget their religious and political differences. "Everybody" of importance in Ireland came to Dublin for the Horse Show. The landlords and farmers of Kerry and Cork mingled there once a year with their fellows from Mayo or Meath. For the lover of horse-flesh these shows were great occasions, and I have never seen finer jumping than over the high stone wall at Ballsbridge. As a boy I enjoyed the

privilege of wandering about within the sacred confines of the jumping enclosure. Disregarding all regulations, I am sure, kindly Mr. Robert Bruce, the agricultural superintendent, used to provide me with a steward's badge, and with an air of rightful ownership—I was twelve or thirteen—I would go up to the gate-keeper and pointing to my badge enjoy the subservient manner with which he threw open the gate, and I sailed past the barrier followed by the envious glances of the crowd. Youth is not assailed by qualms of conscience as to the fairness of hereditary privilege!

A red-letter occasion was when the present King, then Duke of York, came over to Ireland and was present in the jumping ring, surrounded by top-hatted members of the Royal Dublin Society. I was introduced to the Duke and disregarding etiquette plunged into a conversation about my stamp collection. The Duke was evidently interested and for over ten minutes we discussed some of the problems of the philatelist. But the frowns of Lord Rathdonnell and other officials clearly showed me more important matters were in the offing and I withdrew with a grateful memory of the Duke's kindness to a small boy.

I made my bow to Viceregal circles, in the year 1891 when I was appointed Page to Lady Zetland, wife of the Lord Lieutenant. The life of social Ireland centred round Dublin Castle and the Viceregal Lodge in Phoenix Park. When my mother told me that I was to be page to Lady Zetland—I was then eight—I was agitatedly happy. I did not know why I was chosen but it seemed a great honour and the grown-ups were pleased. Besides, very exciting events lay ahead. I was to have my hair curled by the Viceregal hairdresser, Worn, in Stephens Green; I was to have a wonderful St. Patrick's-blue and white silk suit, with hanging cape and tassels and a gilt sword and a hat trimmed with ostrich feathers; and I was to be in attendance at the Drawing Rooms and at St. Patrick's Ball—though what St. Patrick would have said to all

this finery I did not enquire. The knights of St. Patrick wore beautiful pale-blue cloaks on ceremonial occasions. I thought how lovely to be a knight of St. Patrick. I wondered how you became one—I supposed only by being one who did knightly deeds like King Arthur's followers. St. Patrick was a reality to me because I had been to Iona, off the coast of Scotland, on a very rough day with my mother; and I had not been sea-sick when the others lay on deck chairs looking green and every now and then uttering groans.

When I was on duty with Lady Zetland my parents came to Dublin for the night and took rooms at the Shelbourne Hotel close to my hairdressers—and much too excited to enjoy my supper I was escorted to the Castle with rather a thumping heart. In Ireland the "Drawing-Rooms" used to take place in the evenings. I was then handed over to an alarming man with a long moustache wearing an evening suit with pale-blue silk facings and brass buttons. He instructed my fellow page and myself in our duties. I had never seen such a blaze of light nor so many fine ladies, all dressed-up in ostrich feathers and long trains—though how they could like going about with nothing on their bosoms I did not understand. Lady Zetland was very kind to me and told someone to take me to have nice pink strawberry ices in a neighbouring room. I liked Lady Zetland—not only on account of the ices but also because she was so kind and grand and was the mother of Lady Maud Dundas,\* whom I admired very much, even if she did seem to like my elder brother more than me.

All the men wore wonderful uniforms and cocked hats and knee breeches. I thought how marvellous it would be to wear an eye-glass like Lord Zetland and a coat with gold braid on it and white breeches and silk stockings and dance quadrilles with lovely ladies like the Duchess of Leinster,† whose jewels bobbed about her soft white

\* Now Lady Fitzwilliam.

† The famous beauty.





The author as page to Lady Zetland in 1891. The youthful courtier was very proud of his finery.

*To face page 193.*

neck. When I got tired of watching the dancing, which I did pretty soon, Lady Zetland said I might sit on her gilt ceremonial chair. I sat there swinging my legs till the alarming man in the blue-faced coat came and told me to keep quiet. There was a lot of standing about in between times and no one was paying attention to me, so I sought distraction. Lady Zetland was standing talking to Mr. Balfour; I knew his face quite well because we had his photograph at home and he had been to see us. Mr. Balfour was a big tall man, much taller than Lord Zetland and he went in at the front—I wondered if he ate enough. He had a very fine uniform, with those white breeches that the extra grand people wore. I wondered if I would one day have a uniform like that, although it was not as pretty as my pale-blue jacket with lace ruffles, but I did not like those lace ruffles: they got in the way when I was eating ices. Perhaps some day I would have a suit like father's, but he only had dark-blue trousers. What long legs Mr. Balfour had—they looked much nicer in their white silk stockings than father's! I pinched my legs to feel how hard they were. I wondered if Mr. Balfour's legs were as hard as mine—harder, I expected, because he was older. Why should I not feel them? Then I would know for certain, it would be such fun. So I crept round unnoticed to the back of the raised dais where he and Lady Zetland were standing and gave his leg, just below where his white knee-breeches ended, a quick pinch!

Consternation—Mr. Balfour looked taken aback and Lady Zetland surprised. The man with the long moustache and the blue facings came up to me. I was very frightened. I hadn't meant to hurt him. Perhaps it was not very wicked after all because Lady Zetland was laughing now and so was Mr. Balfour. They said they were sure I wanted to be a good little boy but I must never do anything like that again. My mother and father came up and there was more talking and laughing and soon after that I had another ice and was taken home



and they told me I must promise never again to pinch legs even if they were in silk stockings, because if I did I should not be able to wear my lovely suit and sword any more.

That is as far as I can recollect my pageship and the end of my days as a courtier, though Lady Zetland remained a friend all her life. In 1918 I came in contact with Mr. Balfour again when he became president of the English-Speaking Union, and I reminded him then, much to his amusement, of my youthful delinquency.

On looking back at my early youth I think that this experience of being page was bad for me. Small boys of eight are impressionable. I suddenly found myself in an artificial world, in which the wrong values were accentuated, and in which I strutted about in finery like the grown-ups. Till I received the hard knocks of my postcard failure after leaving Eton a dozen years later, I remained a snob at heart. I liked consorting with people with handles to their names. The Duchess of Leinster in her tiara and blue dress and wonderful colouring appeared like a fairy princess to my youthful eyes. I talked to real Dukes and Earls. My childish imagination was stirred. I knew I could never be a Duke myself but I might with luck become a Lord some day!

After returning from a meal with the Dundas family at the Viceregal Lodge in Phoenix Park, I wished we had a footman at home to wait at table and not merely a butler. Coming back from school on one occasion an Eton friend was met at Kingstown Pier by a carriage and pair with coachman and footman on the box. I was mortified because on the box of my mother's victoria Sam\* sat in solitary state, though I had to admit that he could hold his own in the smartness of his glistening top boots and spotless white breeches and in the shining harness of our well-groomed horses. I wanted my father to let our stable boy don livery and sit beside Sam!

The immaculately dressed people who circulated under

\* Sam Crowther, for thirty years our coachman.

the massive candelabra and thronged the gilded corridors and rooms of Dublin Castle were very sure of themselves. Theirs was the world that counted. In day clothes at Punchestown or at the Horse Show they were equally certain that they were Ireland. It was impossible to imagine that in thirty years all this grandeur would be no more. If anyone had said that thirty years later Donald Buckley, a general storekeeper, would be taking the place of Lord Zetland, and that there would be no more "Drawing-Rooms," no more knights of St. Patrick at the Castle, he would have been regarded as a lunatic.

When the Anglo-Irish treaty was signed the metamorphosis was as great as that achieved by the French Revolution. The rule of the gentry had passed. The people were masters now. Obscure grocers and printers, schoolmasters and post-office officials were in control. They might not reach Kildare Street Club standards but they were ready to die for their beloved Ireland.

Before most revolutions the aristocrats and nobility seem to have been so sure of the established order that the coming storm took them unawares. In the case of Ireland the war had already divided the lives of our generation into two.\* Whatever else it did August 1914 gave us a new standard of values. Our whole existence was rocking, we were living in a world in which the unexpected was always happening. Hence when the Sinn Féin Rebellion broke out on Easter Monday, 1916, it was only a seven days' wonder. Within the next six weeks Kut had fallen, the British Conscription Bill had been passed, the Battle of Jutland had been fought, General Brusiloff's offensive had been launched and Lord Kitchener had been lost at sea! The British public gave but fleeting attention to Ireland.

\* In 1916, Mr. Asquith, in speaking of the Lord Lieutenancy, admitted that it had become an anomaly, merely "enabling gracious, well-mannered persons to discharge social and charitable functions."—*Spectator*, 1916, Vol. II, p. 146.

## CHANGING VIEWS ON IRELAND

The change in my views on Ireland dates from my first visit to Canada and the United States in 1906. As I travelled increasingly far afield I learnt that my views of the Empire had been very limited and that in reality the British Commonwealth was a much more wonderful political institution than I had thought, and that a free Ireland should be able to find full scope for independent nationhood within its structure, as had Canada and South Africa—great and freedom-loving nations. An interview with Sir Wilfred Laurier at the Château Frontenac, Quebec, during my first days on the American Continent taught me two vital lessons. Firstly, that the British Empire was no longer a British-run Empire, and secondly, that a close understanding must exist between the peoples of the Empire and of the United States.

Laurier was an orator—I had enjoyed listening to him at Empire gatherings in London—but he was also a far-seeing man. During subsequent visits to Canada and the United States and in South Africa, Australia and New Zealand, I continued to follow the train of thought that Laurier had started in my mind. Whenever occasion occurred I discussed the Irish question with the leaders of the English-speaking world. With Canadians such as MacKenzie King and Bourassa, with South Africans such as Botha and Hertzog; and in the United States with men of Irish descent as different in their outlook as Cardinal Gibbons, Burke Cochran the spell-binder, and W. Jennings Bryan. I compared my conclusions with those of an Irishman at home for whom I had a great respect—Horace Plunkett. His intimate acquaintance with the United States was a special bond. In him my enthusiasm for “English-speaking” understanding found a warm supporter. I regarded Ireland as an essential link in Anglo-American friendship.

Another factor in my evolution as a Home Ruler was my admiration for Cecil Rhodes, my boyhood's hero. Had

not Rhodes, the prophet of British Imperialism and Anglo-Saxondom, given £10,000 to the Irish Home Rule Fund in the eighties? Rhodes, with his first-hand experience of South Africa, knew that Dublin Castle (or Downing Street) government could not endure. Ireland must one day enter into a scheme of Imperial federation.

On my tours of discovery on the North American continent I made a special effort to extend my acquaintance-ship beyond the usual Anglophil circles with which the travelling Englishman\* comes into contact. Talks with Irish traffic "cops," Tammany "bosses," police captains, railroad conductors, foremen in the Chicago packing yards, cowboys out West, bell-boys and journalists, taught me what an important rôle my fellow Irishmen play in the political life of the United States. But my wayside discussions also taught me that the Irish in the United States, almost without exception, had a bitter grievance against the Ireland in which I had been born and brought up. That is, against the world of Dublin Castle, the Kildare Street Club and landlordism. I had heated arguments with extreme Republicans. I was shocked to find how violent was their hate of everything British—much more bitter than anything I had found among even the backveldt Dutch in South Africa, who had been fighting against us a dozen years before. There was an unreasoning element in the hate of the Irish Republican Brotherhood and Fenian circles in America. They regarded Britain as wholly black. Hundred-per-cent. right was on the Irish side, there was nothing to be said on the British side. On one occasion in the streets of Chicago I got into an argument with two Irish policemen. We became so heated that for a moment I wondered if perhaps I was wise to have attempted to persuade them that—apart from Ireland—the British Commonwealth stood "for freedom, order and good government!"

On another occasion, just after the war, I got into a

\* I use the term "Englishman" as it is used in America, to designate all who come from Great Britain, much to the chagrin of the "Celtic fringe."

controversy with an Irish journalist on the staff of an anti-British paper. Doubtless he had learnt some of his loathing for things British from that apostle of Anglophobia in America, John Devoy, the Fenian. At one time during the war I kept specimens of Irish vituperation against the British Empire. This sample will serve. It was taken from a speech by an Irish patriot printed in the *Chicago Herald Examiner* :

England sent Gurkha soldiers to Irish soil, and our women were ravished and then put to death, our children shot in the streets, our men imprisoned. The treatment of Belgium might almost be called angelic when compared to what Ireland has undergone.

It was all very tragic. It was salutary thus early in life to learn how different the other fellow's point of view can be.

Ireland had a grievance. During the next years I sought to learn what that grievance was, even if I still considered that many of the Irish patriots were hypnotised by a word. They were obsessed by the word "Republic." Once give Ireland a Republic and the millennium would descend upon the Emerald Isle. Patriots in all countries are too often carried away by a slogan. I am not entering upon a comparison between the republican and the constitutional monarchical form of government. There is much to be said for both systems. But Nationalist leaders are too apt to think that national greatness and well-being can be achieved by changing a label—by introducing some new political system. The task of ordered government is more complex than that. Integrity in public life, the speedy administration of justice, a planned education, good roads, efficient health and sanitary laws, respect for the opinion of others can only be obtained if there are enlightened citizens. There are still I fear some Irishmen in North and South who have not yet grasped that fundamental fact.

My travels taught me two other facts essential to a

correct understanding of the Irish problem. Green Ireland yearned for Home Rule while the majority in Ulster would have none of it. My Ulster relatives and friends held views typical of the Ulster majority in their determination to remain linked with Great Britain and the British Empire. I also tried to ascertain why it was that Roman Catholic Irishmen—especially in Ireland—so rarely responded to the vision of the British Commonwealth.\* It could not be anything inherent in the Roman Catholic religion, because in England, Canada, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand and Newfoundland I had known many leading imperialists who belonged to the Roman Church. Was the indifference to or even dislike of the British Commonwealth felt by stay-at-home Irishmen due to the fact that their allegiance had been given to another Empire exclusively—the Empire of Rome? They had no room for two allegiances. In the Empire overseas, on the other hand, the vision of Roman Catholic Irishmen had expanded: they had responded to a “loyal” environment. They learnt that there was nothing incompatible between the two loyalties—to the British Commonwealth as a whole and to Mother Church.

As honorary secretary of the Patriotic League of Britons Overseas, established under the ægis of the British Foreign Office, I had a demonstration of the hostility of a section of the Irish priesthood to the British connection, when a branch of our society was established in Rome. The heads of the English, Scottish and Canadian Colleges enthusiastically supported the movement: the heads of the Irish College alone refused. “We are not British subjects, but only Irish subjects of King George,” was their reply. The fount of Irish clerical disaffection was for many years seated in the Irish college in Rome. A Roman Catholic correspondent wrote to the *Spectator* in 1916, “An Irish student for Orders, if

\* I know that there are many warm supporters of the British Commonwealth in Ireland who are Roman Catholics, but I have to generalise.

he be not a rebel when he enters the college, is sure to be one at heart when he comes out of it and returns to his native land to fill some mission and take charge of a parish.”\*

Early in the war, as I have recorded, it appeared for a moment, when John Redmond in the first flush of enthusiasm pledged Ireland's support to the allied cause, that we were heading for a permanent settlement of Anglo-Irish difficulties. Imaginative statesmanship, despite the underground workings of the Republican Brotherhood, might have worked wonders. When the women of Northern Ireland presented a flag with the Red Hand of Ulster embroidered on it Lord Kitchener permitted it to be taken overseas by the Ulster Division. When the Nationalist women of Southern Ireland embroidered a silken flag with the Irish Harp upon it Lord Kitchener ordered that it should not be taken overseas.† Nationalist Ireland, quick to take umbrage, never got over the slight. Everything ought to have been done to back up John Redmond and his brother William. Green flags and special uniforms that would have appealed to national Irish sentiment should have been permitted. A great opportunity was lost. How different might Ireland's response to the Empire's call in 1915 have been if the same enlightened sympathy had been displayed by the British War Office as was shown by a young Canadian of Ulster descent.

Early in the war Campbell Stuart‡ recruited a regiment in Canada for active service. The battalion with which he was associated was Irish Canadian, partly Protestant and partly Roman Catholic. The Duchess of Connaught was its honorary colonel. Stuart conceived the idea of taking the regiment through Ireland on the way to the war

\* *Spectator*, 1916, Vol. II, p. 10 letter, signed “Romanus.”

† See Lloyd George, *War Memoirs*, Vol. II, p. 696 and 755.

‡ Sir Campbell Stuart, subsequently assistant military attaché at the British Embassy at Washington, was the first Dominion citizen, paid by a Dominion, to hold Dominion status in the British diplomatic service; in 1918 he became Deputy Director of Propaganda in Enemy Countries, under Northcliffe.

area. Armed with an introduction to John Redmond, on reaching London he went straight to the House of Commons. There he heard an impassioned speech from the Irish leader. The War Office had refused to permit an Irish Lancashire regiment to march through Ireland. Campbell Stuart sought an interview with Redmond, who warmly endorsed his mission, but pointed out its hopelessness as evidenced by his own failure. After two months' activity Campbell Stuart secured the necessary permission. He then spent two months in Ireland preparing the way for a visit which proved historic. People of all religions united to welcome the Canadians in January, 1917. Political differences were temporarily forgotten. This experience convinced Campbell Stuart that the Irish problem is soluble provided it is approached in the right spirit—a view which coincides with my own.

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# Chapter XIV

## AN ATTEMPT AT PEACEMAKING

EASTER WEEK IN 1916 AND AFTER—IRISH UNITY—FAILURE

## Chapter XIV

### AN ATTEMPT AT PEACE MAKING

EASTER WEEK, 1916, AND AFTER

IN political matters my greatest disappointment during the war was Ireland's repudiation of John Redmond. In those dramatic August days of 1914 the speeches of the Irish leader sent a thrill through the hearts of all Irishmen who hoped to live to see Ireland a free Dominion within the British Commonwealth. When the Irish Home Rule Bill passed its third reading in the House of Commons a new era in the relationship of the two countries seemed to be opening, although reports from Ulster relatives and friends announced Northern Ireland's determination to have nothing to say to the measure. I was convinced, however, that fighting side by side in France Ulstermen and Southern Irishmen would learn to appreciate each other's aims.

When Redmond told the British people that the concession of liberty to his countrymen would have the same effect in Ireland as in South Africa, I was certain that he was right. Dissatisfaction would assuredly give way to goodwill and Ireland would become a source of strength instead of weakness to the Commonwealth. In October, 1914, I was dismayed to read a speech by John Dillon in which he referred to the activities of Sinn Feiners and pro-Germans, supplied apparently with unlimited funds, who were stirring up the people and spreading lies about the Empire. It was satisfactory to read the protest of Dillon, a nationalist, against the doctrine that "a soldier in the British Army could not be a good Irishman." During brief visits to Ireland in 1914 and 1915 I heard rumours that Sinn Fein was being financed from America. As Sinn Fein represented only a small minority of the people I never for a moment supposed it would come into the open during the war.

While in Devonshire for the Easter holidays I received the first confused accounts of the Dublin Rebellion. There had been fighting at Ballsbridge, Stephen's Green and Westland Row Railway Station—places familiar to me since my childhood. I could hardly believe my eyes. A letter from London written on Easter Monday contained this sentence :

F. who is just back from his club tells me there are persistent rumours of the Germans having landed in Ireland and of a revolution there. What a world we live in ! He also said there were rumours of the Germans having landed in England and all the women and children in the towns on the East Coast have been ordered inland.

The papers reported the capture of Sir Roger Casement, who had landed off the coast of Kerry with an Irish companion in a small boat put ashore by a German submarine. What was the virus that had turned a man once high up in the British Consular Service, who had accepted a title and a pension from the British government, into a rebel ? The Irish patriots had their eyes on America, and when I read the manifesto of "The Provisional Government of the Irish Republic", in which the story was told how Ireland, "supported by her exiled children in America and by gallant allies in Europe", had struck "in the full confidence of victory", I was bewildered. Apparently the sceptics were right. The underground machinations of the Irish Republican Brotherhood had been more widespread than I supposed. The Irish extremists, whom I had met in America, were apparently the real leaders of "progressive" Ireland, and not John Redmond and his following.

This account of the Rebellion was written by my father at the time :

On Easter Monday the 24th April, 1916, I went into Dublin as usual by the 9 o'clock train from Ballybrack\* and called at the Kildare Street Club on my way up to the R.D.S. show grounds

\* Our local station, ten miles from Dublin.

at Ballsbridge,\* where I had promised to meet Mr. Robert Bruce, our agricultural superintendent, to see that everything was ready for the opening of our Spring Show the next day.

Most of the cattle and other exhibits had fortunately arrived at the show grounds the previous Saturday. At the Club I met a friend who had just come up from Cork. He told me that his district was very unsettled and that they had been expecting some sort of outbreak for the last few days. However I didn't see how that could affect our show, especially as I knew the southern cattle would be in, and I proceeded to Ballsbridge promising to come back and lunch with some friends at 1 o'clock.

Bruce and I did our business and agreed that the Show was a very promising one. I was leaving about 12.30 and was standing at the Show Entrance when two little telegraph boys dashed up on their bicycles shouting "they're out" and that they had seen a man shot in Stephen's Green. Shortly afterwards we had telephone messages from the Dublin Society's offices in Kildare Street giving us all the information to be had. There was no use in trying to go back to Dublin as the streets were said to be full of armed rebels and spasmodic shooting was going on.

The first thing we did was to get a big hose, that was supplied with a powerful force of water, into position in case we were attacked. We then decided that there was no use in funking and that the Show should be held unless we were actually stopped. We soon heard that we need not expect any of our friends from the South, that troops were coming rapidly from the Curragh and that English regiments had also been telegraphed for. Fortunately our President, Lord Rathdonnell, was staying at Kingstown and we expected our judges and many friends from England to arrive by the boat that afternoon, and I undertook, if it was possible, to meet them on my way home to Ballybrack and to tell them what had happened in case they liked to go back by the next boat.

This brought us up to about 4 o'clock when I left the Show to try and accomplish my mission. I had just secured an outside car when some poor people I knew in Wicklow came up to me, saying that they had come up to Dublin for the holiday and didn't know how to get back. So I said I would take them in my car to Kingstown whence they would be able to get a train to Wicklow. The husband, wife and a baby got up on one side of the car and a little girl got up with me on the other side, and I always thought it was a fortunate arrangement from my point of view. If I had been alone and not one of a holiday party, I might have been stopped, as about a mile from the Show we actually had to drive through a force of 100 armed Sinn Feiners. On getting to Kingstown I found that my English friends had no ambition to

\* Ballsbridge is a mile and a half from the centre of Dublin.

witness an Irish rebellion, and most of them went straight back by the next boat.

Next day, Tuesday, 25th April, I was in Kingstown before 8 o'clock when a most unwonted sight met my eyes. Cavalry soldiers were bivouacking outside the St. George's Yacht Club and inside every available inch was occupied by officers, many of whom had slept there, only too thankful to have a roof over their heads. I found out who were the Commanding Officers and told them that we were going to hold the Show but as there would be few visitors we could put up a considerable number of the military at Ballsbridge and could hand over to them the provisions that we had laid in for our expected guests. I then drove on into the Show with a carman I knew well and found that Lord Rathdonnell, our President, and Mr. Doyne were the only other officials who were able to reach the Show.

When we had everything settled as to the arrangements for the Show, emergency judges, and the accommodation for the soldiers, the day looked as if it was going to be a day of fighting. I went back to Killiney for luncheon to see that my family was all right. After luncheon I walked up Killiney Hill with my glasses and watched Dublin and notably the Post Office in Sackville Street, which was occupied by the Rebels, being shelled with wonderful accuracy by the gun boats in Kingstown.

Then I went into the Show again and brought Matthews our Shorthorn Auctioneer, head of Messrs. Thornton & Co. back with me to stay the night and discuss the extraordinary situation.

It was a very hot day and the English troops marched up from Kingstown and generally made a halt when they reached Ballsbridge before they got into the line of fire. One British regiment consisted of young recruits, such a nice lot of boys. We brought them lemonade, for which they were most grateful. Only six or eight hundred yards on they had to pass houses that were occupied by rebel snipers, and nearly two hundred of them were killed and many wounded. It always seemed to me such a wanton waste of life, though we tried to explain to them as well as we could the geography of the streets in that part of Dublin and what they might expect.

The next three days there was so much to do that I went into the Show and remained there all day. The military were getting the situation well in hand though there were spasmodic outbursts and we still had to have soldiers guarding our house. Wonderfully little damage was done at the Dublin Society's premises. We could see the bullet marks through some of the high iron roofs.

There was a very brisk sale of the prize-winning animals and I got 900 guineas for the Champion yearling Shorthorn Bull which was the highest price I had realised up to that time.

English newspapers and letters, of which we had been deprived for the first 4 or 5 days, began to circulate again, and by the end of the week things were becoming normal. On the 1st of May I was once more able to go as usual to the Land Commission Office in Dublin and learn the news, and on Tuesday for the first time I lunched at the Kildare Street Club. Dublin was a ruined city for the time being and Sackville Street a scene of desolation.

With considerable rejoicing we heard of Birrell's resignation on the 4th of May, his feeble efforts as a ruler had brought about much of the Irish trouble. A new spirit of distrust of the people seemed to permeate every branch of the civil service. Mr. Asquith paid a visit to Ireland which did far more harm than good, and all the old spirit of friendship and goodwill, which was one of the great charms of Irish life, vanished overnight.

Several Roman Catholic farmers and dealers, good friends of mine, came to see me and talk things over. They complained bitterly of this changed feeling, and more than one went down to his grave saddened by the changed aspect of Ireland.

There were just two occasions when conscription could have been introduced with very little difficulty and when the people were more or less expecting it, the first was in the Spring of 1915 when I wrote to six prominent members of the Cabinet and to Lord Kitchener. All the Cabinet ministers sent me replies and most of them appeared to approve of my suggestion. Lord Kitchener alone gave me only an acknowledgment and I heard afterwards privately that he disapproved of trying to conscript the Irish. The other occasion was shortly after the rebellion when the people were thoroughly cowed.

F.W.

### IRISH UNITY—FAILURE

I bind unto myself to-day,  
The pow'r of God to hold and lead,  
His eye to watch, His might to stay,  
His ear to hearken to my need,  
The wisdom of my God to teach  
His hand to guide, His shield to ward;  
The Word of God to give me speech,  
His Heavenly Host to be my guard.

(St. Patrick's Breastplate.)

In March, 1917, while I was awaiting instructions from the Royal Flying Corps as to where I was to report

for training, after my application for a commission had been granted, I had two weeks to spare. I was anxious to see my family before joining up and wanted to study the latest phase of Irish disaffection. In the previous summer Mr. Duke\* had been appointed Chief Secretary with a seat in the Cabinet. He was considered by Mr. Asquith to have the requisite qualities for the difficult position: "a broad and judicial mind, a firm hand, administrative capacity, sympathy with the Irish people, and a strong desire to promote an Irish settlement." Early in 1917 my father had discussed the Irish situation with Mr. Duke and had laid before him certain suggestions, based on my Dominion experience, which I wished to make to him. Mr. Duke asked my father if I would be ready to study conditions in Dublin and Belfast in a purely unofficial capacity. Under no circumstances was I to give out that I was his emissary—I was merely an Irishman, with special affiliations with the Empire overseas, who might bring a fresh point of view to bear on the situation. I had several interviews with Mr. Duke, and before setting off on my mission he warned me with a friendly twinkle in his eye that there must be no newspaper publicity and if any rumours were circulated that I was his representative I should be repudiated! The Royal Flying Corps gave me a written authority in response to Mr. Duke's application for the loan of my services.

On the morning of St. Patrick's Day, just as the dawn was breaking, I looked out of the port-hole of my cabin and saw the lights of Kingstown. In my pocket-book I carried the words of St. Patrick's Breastplate and I read them finally before going ashore. I hoped that St. Patrick would bless my efforts. I wondered if my Protestant relatives, my Presbyterian friends in Ulster, would approve of my putting myself under the wing of St. Patrick!

My scheme was to establish a society, very similar in its methods to the Overseas Club. The proposed organisation was to be called "The Irish Unity League" and its

\* Unionist member for Exeter.

slogan was to be "United Ireland within a United Empire." I set forth its aims on mimeographed sheets, which I distributed to those I interviewed.\*

My intention had been to entrust the scheme to carefully selected committees in Dublin and Belfast, who would undertake the task of forming branches, distributing literature, arranging public meetings and organising. A special feature of the society's work was to consist of inviting parties from Ulster to visit Southern Ireland and vice versa. My father was much interested in the idea and promised to hold a watching brief for me after I had joined up, and to further the cause in the background.

In a mood of depression after the first day, I wrote:

Killacoon, Killiney,  
Co. Dublin.

18 March, 1917.

As regards political prospects in Ireland, the problem is very difficult, just as we imagined. If I had unlimited time and a free mind it would be possible to put a scheme through, on the lines of the Irish Unity League, but it is quite hopeless to do anything in a couple of weeks.

As I arrived in Ireland on a Bank Holiday there was no Bray train so I had to take an outside car—it had a grey horse. During breakfast F. told me what he has done so far. He has seen six or seven people and they had been very sympathetic and have promised help. Unquestionably an atmosphere of settlement is in the air.

F. and I went up to Dublin yesterday and spent all day going round to see people. He had not been able to arrange a meeting as it was St. Patrick's Day, a Bank Holiday. First we went to see Lord Decies, the Press Censor and a moderate Unionist. He promised us that he would attend the Round Table Conference we are trying to arrange.

Then I went to see my old friend Sir Edward O'Farrell, who is Duke's right hand man in Ireland, then to see Dr. Bernard, Protestant Archbishop of Dublin, a fine type of man but an extreme Unionist. We lunched at the Kildare Street Club and there was more talking, and learning about the Irish situation generally. Then to see Max Green, Redmond's son-in-law, whom I used to know well as a boy. He was very friendly and promised help, but said the difficulties were very great. Then to the house of

\* See Appendix, p. 497.



"A.E." (Russell), the poet, painter and writer. Met two advanced Nationalists there who understand the Sinn Fein standpoint and had a great talk.

To sum up, I believe that a settlement would be perfectly possible. But I would have to absorb Irish atmosphere and remain here for some months and throw myself into the cause and do nothing else, which is, of course, out of the question. (*Letter.*)

My first few days of personal contacts and "soundings" convinced me that if there had been no war on and I could have opened an office in Ireland the time was ripe for settlement as far as Southern Ireland was concerned, but I was not so sure about Ulster. The Northern Province had naturally been gravely disturbed by Easter Week and by the rising Sinn Fein tide and was determined not to loosen its bonds with Great Britain. I had to go back to London for a couple of days to see about my uniform.

On 25 March I returned to Ireland.

This letter described my return journey to Ireland for my final week:

Killacoona, Killiney,  
Co. Dublin,

Sunday, 25 March, 1917.

I had a bad night. At 2 o'clock a steward called me and told me there were submarines in the Channel.\* I did not take off my clothes as immediately after leaving Holyhead all the lights were suddenly switched out, so I had to arrange myself in my bunk in the dark as best I could. It is rather a jumpy sensation.

The head steward, an old friend, was on the sister-ship just outside Havre two months ago, when she was torpedoed. They had been taking troops across and were on the return journey. . . . He told me that two steamers were sunk by a submarine just outside Holyhead last night, hence all these precautions. . . .

The daffodils are just coming out and lots of primroses, all the buds in the hedges are waiting to burst. (*Letter.*)

My scheme was a twofold one. To try to form committees in North and South to act together and to carry on propaganda for conciliation and co-operation as relentlessly as the irreconcilables were preaching war. Secondly to lay before both sections of Ireland my concrete scheme

\* Unrestricted "U-boat" warfare had been in force since February, 1917.

for the future government of the country, which in some respects resembled the proposals put forward by *The Times* in 1919.\* I suggested that two Provincial Parliaments should be set up, one in Dublin for Leinster, Munster and Connaught, and the other in Belfast for Ulster, and that these parliaments should deal with all internal matters. I proposed that an all-Ireland Council of twenty-four, consisting of twelve representatives from Southern Ireland and twelve from Ulster, should deal with matters of common concern, such as customs (and Ireland was to have fiscal autonomy), railways, postal services and fisheries, and that the sessions of this Council should be held alternately in Dublin and Belfast. I purposely left my Council rather vague. I hoped with the passing of time it would become a real all-Ireland Parliament. In Ulster's present mood I knew she would refuse to enter a Dublin parliament. Self-governing Provinces like Ontario and Quebec, of different racial and religious origins, had been able to coalesce into a united Canada: why should not North and South Ireland do the same, granted sympathy and understanding on the part of the British Government—and *time*?

I am still of the opinion that as the atmosphere was so favourable a settlement could have been achieved in 1917. I also advocated that the first Imperial Conference after the war should meet in Dublin. My trump card was increasing contact between the Dominions and Ireland. I wanted Ireland to have far horizons, to forget past wrongs and to look to a better future. On the familiar journey from Dublin to Belfast, and as I passed through Dunleer and Castle Bellingham Stations, I thought of my childhood and the different Ireland I had lived in then. Rather apprehensively I wondered what success I would have with my peacemaking in Ulster. I began to ruminate on

\* The *Times* scheme proposed two Provincial Legislatures, one for Ulster and one for the rest of Ireland with powers for dealing with all internal affairs, and an all-Ireland Parliament sitting alternately at Dublin and Belfast dealing with all-Ireland problems. The United Kingdom to retain sovereign powers in such matters as peace and war, the fighting services and foreign policy.

my life and the unexpected way it was developing. When I was at Eton I thought I was destined for diplomacy, or sometimes I toyed with the idea of going into parliament. After the postcard failure had followed rapid success in Fleet Street. Then I had become involved in causes. With the passing of each year I knew that I was no longer a free agent, that I should be working for causes for the rest of my life. Fools rush in where angels fear to tread! Was I not rather ill-advised to enter upon the stormy seas raging between North and South. Perhaps, but the present attempt was only a preliminary effort. Besides, even the atheist cannot deny that there is a destiny that shapes one's ends. In my life there has always been an "urge" which I could not resist.

My father accompanied me in my two Ulster journeys, and with his great knowledge of Ireland and of the leading personalities he gave me invaluable help. He arranged the desired interviews for me but owing to his official position he frequently did not take part in the discussions. Having made the introduction he left me alone to tell my story.

In my first letter from Belfast I wrote :

Belfast,

Tuesday, 27 March, 1917.

I am afraid I have not made much headway, there is tremendous prejudice here against Southern Ireland after the past year. We drove straight off in a taxi to see one of the most important men in Belfast, the head of the great shipbuilding firm of Workman & Clark, Mr. George Clark.\* We had over an hour with him and must have kept him from his lunch as we did not leave him till after 2 o'clock. Although he entirely disagreed with my outlook I much enjoyed the talk and I liked him greatly.

Mr. Clark asked me to come back to-day (Tuesday) to have an informal discussion with six or seven of his foremen; he said by doing so I could get a better insight into Ulster's opinion than in any other way, so I am going back to-day, 10.30. He said it would be better if I came alone as the men would talk more freely.

At 3 o'clock yesterday Father and I started forth again and

\* Subsequently Sir George Clark, who died in March, 1935.

went to see two leading bankers. We had a very hot half-hour with them, they were friendly but terrifically "extremist" and used all the arguments of 25 years ago, and I came out feeling hopeless. Then we met three leading shipping and grain men. Their argument is that they want to be left alone, and don't want to have anything to say to the rest of Ireland or the Roman Catholics, although 40 per cent. of the population of Belfast is Roman Catholic!

One requires a great deal of patience. After tea we went to the Ulster Club. The head waiter there used to be our butler twenty-eight years ago and was very pleased to see me and called me "Master Eby," and said I used to come and clean the silver with him in the pantry!

One thing is certain, the rest of Ireland is much more reasonable and ready for a settlement, but at the same time the people here are splendidly self-reliant, and I have great admiration for their sterling qualities. I really don't know whether we shall make any headway. (*Letter.*)

I returned to our hotel that first evening very depressed :

Belfast,

Wednesday, 28 March, 1917.

After breakfast Lord Decies rang up from Dublin and we talked things over. He was nice and encouraging and had been in London and had just got back after seeing Duke. We went first to see a man called Davies, the head of a large works here. We had an argument for an hour-and-a-half; we parted great friends, he said he would gladly help. He had been overseas a good deal. I do find it easier talking to the men who have been to the States and the Dominions.

Then to see the ex-Lord Mayor; he was quite reasonable. Lunched at club with Mr. George Clark, the shipbuilder. I sat between two irreconcilable Ulstermen. Their one idea was to cut off from the rest of Ireland; I had to do all the defending of our position. I never had such a tough discussion!

Then Mr. Clark took me to his shipbuilding works and I sat for an hour in a room closeted with seven of his workmen. I got on very well with them and liked them so much. They are fine Imperialists but don't want to have anything to say to the rest of Ireland. Then Mr. Clark for an hour and a half took me over his shipbuilding yard which was very interesting. I saw hospital ships for Mesopotamia.

The upshot of our day is that we don't think the League is possible until after the new Government.

Belfast,

30 March, 1917.

After running back to Dublin for twenty-four hours I am here again. The position really is that the government are anyhow going to bring in a Bill and till they do I don't think there is any reason for me to remain here. I still think there is room for my Unity League but we would have to wait to establish it till after the government attempts a settlement.

I have done my best but I fear there is nothing more to be done at present. . . . I don't think there will be another rebellion at Easter this year. (*Letters.*)

When I talked things over with my Dublin friends I wished that they had a greater appreciation of the Ulster point of view. They were so accustomed to talking about Home Rule and majority rule, that frequently they forgot that what is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander, that North-east Ulster has its Protestant majority and that any attempt to coerce Ulster is destined to fail. I wished they could have talked to my friends the foremen in Workman & Clark's shipbuilding yards. If they had they would have recognised that the rights of the *two* Irelands must be acknowledged and a bridge between the two must be constructed.

I had to agree with Mr. Lloyd George, who said in March, 1917, "It is no use mincing words, let us have a clear understanding. To place them (the people of North-Eastern Ireland) under national rule against their will would be as glaring an outrage on the principles of liberty and self-government as the demand of self-government would be for the rest of Ireland."\* The problem was certainly very difficult. Neither side could visualise the situation from its opponent's standpoint. If Ulster made slighting references to the Roman Church and Nationalist Ireland's cherished ideals, the South talked

\* I took the opportunity to point out to one of my Southern friends that his fine phrase "The right to order their own lives, to shape their own destiny, to mould their own future along the lines and on the principles which their hearts and consciences teach them to be just, this is the inalienable right of a free people, this is and always has been the claim of Ireland" applied equally to North-East Ireland.

of Ulstermen as interlopers and pseudo-Irishmen. When Southern Irishmen told me that they were ready to make almost any sacrifice to bring Ulster in, but that *under no circumstances* would they consent to leave her out, I was apprehensive. The wise policy would have been conciliation and not threats: to have established an Irish Free State, within the British Commonwealth, and to have given Ulster the right to vote herself into the Irish state should she desire to do so. But there must be no compulsion.\* My proposed Council of twenty-four would have to serve as a stop-gap and maintain contact between the two Irelands for the time being. It was my conviction that Ulster had a vital contribution to make to Ireland which she alone could supply.

87, Victoria Street, S.W.,

Sunday, 1 April, 1917.

I met Duke on the steps of the Irish Office on Friday on getting back and walked as far as the House of Commons with him. . . . Something will have to be done though I don't believe the government knows its own mind yet. I am perfectly certain the Unity League will be wanted before long. (*Letter.*)

My next attempt at Irish peacemaking was in the summer of 1919, when I arranged a meeting in Dublin between Arthur Griffith, the founder of the Sinn Fein movement, and one of his leading supporters and representatives of the Southern Unionists. The account of the failure of this attempt will be given in its proper sequence later on.

\* As an Ulster friend put the matter to me, "When Southern Ireland has shewn that she can successfully run the three Southern provinces *within* the British Empire, it will be time enough for us to consider forming an all-Ireland parliament."

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## Chapter XV

### THE ROYAL FLYING CORPS

MARCH—MAY, 1917

A COG IN THE WAR MACHINE—AMERICA ENTERS THE  
WAR—IN SCOTLAND, RECRUITING FOR THE R.F.C.

## Chapter XV

### THE ROYAL FLYING CORPS

#### A COG IN THE WAR MACHINE

I APPLIED for a commission in the Royal Flying Corps and was duly gazetted second lieutenant on 23 March, 1917. As I was considered too old for ordinary flying I was instructed to report at the School of Military Aeronautics at Reading on the conclusion of my Irish investigations. Accordingly on 5 April I reported for duty at Reading, only to be told that I must be inoculated and return three days later on 8 April.

For the first two weeks it seemed strange to be in uniform—breeches and long boots, a “maternity” jacket that fastened at the side, no tie, a forage cap worn at an angle, and a Sam Browne belt. I was saluted for the first time by a broad-shouldered Australian soldier as I emerged from Howick Place Post Office. I returned the salute as correctly as I could and tried to look as if I had long been accustomed to a military career. I have always thought that men occupying safe jobs should not have the same outward trappings as those destined for the front line. My only previous experience of uniform had been in the Eton volunteers eighteen years before. Within a month, such is human adaptability, uniform seemed quite natural, and office-work in heavy boots was no longer irksome. Before very long I had discarded my “maternity” jacket for an ordinary tunic with comfortable khaki collar and black silk knitted tie.

After nearly twenty years of being my own master it was extraordinary suddenly to find myself a cog in a machine, my destiny depending on an impersonal department at the Hotel Cecil. Before I was eighteen I had run a business and soon after joining Northcliffe I had been put into a position of responsibility. So long as the heads of departments could



show results there was a minimum of interference with personal liberty at Carmelite House. If I did not turn up at the office on Saturdays no one objected, in fact long week-ends and good holidays for brainworkers were encouraged. In my new life I might at any moment receive a telegram instructing me to proceed to an unexpected destination. I felt like the centurion's servant—"To one man he sayeth go and he goeth"—except that my master was a mysterious elusive department not a fellow mortal. When I had originally applied for a commission I had asked to be drafted to the Kite Balloon Section in France but I had been told that I would probably be wanted for organising work. Once caught up in this vast machine my identity would be submerged, the G.S.O.s would naturally forget about me. In my own experience of the war I had often come across square pegs in round holes. It was not reasonable to expect an overworked and rapidly expanding Air Board to trouble about individuals. As a subaltern in the R.F.C. I was a pawn in the game, to be moved about at will. During my first five days there were three changes in my destination and twice I returned to my flat at 87, Victoria Street, after thinking that I had said goodbye to it "for the duration"!

### AMERICA ENTERS THE WAR

I shall always remember Good Friday, 1917—one of the great dates in history. On it the United States of America threw in its lot with the Allies and thereby practically made certain their ultimate victory. From my standpoint the extreme significance of President Wilson's declaration lay in the fact that the United States and ourselves would henceforth be side by side "defending the high cause of freedom and the rights of humanity."\*

I had plenty of time for thinking while getting over

\* Words from the resolution passed by the Houses of Parliament on America's entry into the war.

my inoculation. For the moment my immediate problems were swallowed up in the great events that were happening around me. A tremendous weight had been lifted from my heart. I loved America. I had a great admiration for American idealism, drive, receptivity of new ideas and warm-heartedness. I had never ceased sorrowing over the misunderstandings and misrepresentations caused by the American Revolution and the consequent sundering of the English-speaking world. Together the American and British peoples could save mankind. Peace would have been preserved had Great Britain and the United States informed Germany in 1914 that if the neutrality of Belgium were violated they would declare war against her.

Although I understood President Wilson's difficulties much of his policy since the sinking of the *Lusitania* had puzzled me—as it had puzzled others. Now the horizon of Anglo-Saxon relations was clear. The Anglo-American understanding which Rhodes, Carnegie and W. T. Stead dreamed of, that Page worked for, would come. Common action for civilisation would obliterate many of the painful memories of one hundred and forty years.

The Stars and Stripes and the Union Jack were soon fluttering in the breeze from the tower of the Houses of Parliament. Lord Grey of Fallodon wrote on 8 April to Walter Hines Page what many of us were thinking. "I can't express adequately all that I feel. Great gratitude and great hope are in my heart. I hope now that some great and abiding good to the world will yet be wrought out of all this welter of evil. . . . I glow with admiration."\*

In those early weeks after the American declaration of war I longed to throw myself into the task of consolidating the new relationship between our two Peoples, instead of doing a subaltern's job in the R.F.C. No doubt it was excellent character-training to do what you were told and not what you thought you were fitted for. Besides, millions of my fellows were facing death and those who

\* *Life and Letters of Walter Hines Page*, Heinemann, Vol. II, 1923.

found themselves in organizing jobs had much to be thankful for. But originators of schemes are not reasonable, perhaps if they were they would never bring their ideas to fruition. They kick against the pricks. I knew I had a special job of work to do in bringing the British and American peoples together, and I counted the days till I could tackle it in earnest.

President Wilson's speech to Congress evoked enthusiasm throughout the allied countries. He said :—

Civilisation seems to be in the balance, but right is more precious than peace, and we shall fight for the things which we have always carried nearest our hearts—for democracy, for the right of those who submit to authority to have a voice in their own government, for the rights and liberties of small nations, for the universal dominion of right by such a concert of free peoples as will bring peace and safety to all nations and make the world itself at last free. . . . To such a task we can dedicate our lives, our fortunes, everything we are, everything we have, with the pride of those who know the day has come when America is privileged to spend her blood and might for the principles that gave her birth and the happiness and peace which she has treasured. God helping her she can do no other.

When the papers reported that some of the German High Command had sneered at American capacity to play an important part on the battlefields of Europe because America had no *militarismus* I knew Germany was destined to disillusionment. My friend F. A. MacKenzie, acting as editor of *Overseas* during my absence, wrote :—

I recently asked a very high British authority what was the most hopeful prospect in the war during the months ahead. "America," came the reply without a moment's hesitation. "What you want to do is to preach America all you can. People here have still no idea what her coming means. The people of Germany naturally shrink from contemplating the fact that a nation of a hundred million is voluntarily submitting to conscription, voluntarily placing huge loans at the service of the Allies and voluntarily mobilising the whole of its manufactures for one object only—to destroy Prussianism."



Imperial War Museum Photographs.

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British and American Recruiting Posters.

**TELL THAT TO THE MARINES!**



Two of James Montgomery Flagg war-time posters, used by the United States Government.



## RECRUITING PILOTS IN SCOTLAND FOR THE R.F.C.

On Easter Sunday, armed with railway voucher, I proceeded to Reading.

Reading, Easter Sunday, 1917.

Here I am attached to the Military School of Aeronautics, where I expect to be for the next two months. I put on my uniform for the first time on Thursday, the day on which I first came down here. I went first to the Headquarters, where I was seen by the Commanding Officer, and had to fill in various forms, then we were told where we are all billeted. I am in this little semi-detached house with two others, kept by a landlady of about 55 who is most anxious to make one comfortable.

I have got quite accustomed to being saluted! As this place is some way from the Parade Ground it means getting up at 5.30 every morning. (*Letter to parents.*)

Easter Sunday, 1917. Reading.

I am trying to write this while the landlady talks to me. She is a very nice little body. The house belongs to her and has been left to her by her brother who was an inspector on the Great Western Railway. She is a great talker. Lunch quite good. . . . two cutlets, rice pudding, pineapple, and cider to drink. From two till a quarter to three the landlady chattered, telling me all sorts of things I did not want to hear and I began to despair of ever getting rid of her.

My room looks out into a little back garden of gooseberry bushes and fruit trees bursting into bud. In the centre of the sitting-room is a dinner table, round the walls are eight horsehair chairs, a sofa, of course, and a horsehair armchair. The lavatory is out in the garden, it is next door to the scullery and has to be approached through the kitchen! (*Letter.*)

I had just unpacked and was going for a stroll when an orderly knocked at the door of my lodgings and I was told to report to the adjutant. I was instructed to "report at the Air Board in London with my kit the following morning." So far I had made two needless journeys to Reading at the taxpayer's expense. No wonder the war was costing six million pounds a day!

On Easter Monday I returned to the Air Board, for the

second time since I joined up, to receive fresh instructions. Apparently three departments were competing for my services. It was gratifying to a newly-joined subaltern to know that he was not forgotten. I was to proceed to Glasgow to report to Major Lord Howick in charge of R.F.C. Recruiting in Scotland the following morning. How long would I be there? Presumably "for the duration." My job was to tour through Scotland seeking out young men of eighteen or nineteen to serve as pilots in the R.F.C. There was an urgent need of more candidates as the wastage in France was very heavy. At first when I learnt my destination I was disappointed. I would have preferred to do my two months' training at Reading with the class that was starting on its course that day. But selecting flying officers was important work and my experience of human nature would come in handy. I should be able in the evenings and on Sundays to do my Overseas work and keep in touch with my organisation. Practically right through the war two large leather attaché cases filled with the more important Overseas Club correspondence and the details of its War Funds were sent to me every week. During the week-end I studied the contents, added pencilled instructions and returned the documents to the office every Monday.

After the semi-detached villa at Reading, staying at the Central Hotel, Glasgow, seemed luxurious. The following extracts from letters describe my work :—

10 April, 1917. *Glasgow.* Had breakfast at the Central Hotel, then went round to 46, Bath Street, where I found Howick, who was very nice to me. It is just like an ordinary recruiting office except that we only deal with officers, and of course for the R.F.C. only. During the day we pass some twenty or thirty youths all about 19 in age as pilots or observers. One has to question them and generally make up one's mind about them. There are many forms to fill in!

Howick says that the idea of getting me up was that he wanted someone to travel round to these various places, Dundee, Perth, Aberdeen, Montrose, etc., to see the authorities and introduce suitable candidates. After a bit he is going back to France, where

he is on the Staff, and he wants to hand the job over to me and the authorities want me to be able to keep in touch with my Overseas work.

11 *April, 1917. Glasgow.* Round to breakfast 8.15 with Howick. He was very nice and said, "Not so much of this 'Sir' business, please."

15 *April, 1917. Glasgow.* Sunday. Spent all the morning doing my Overseas Magazine. This is the first day of food restrictions. In the afternoon I went for a walk by the docks past squalid dwellings and many public houses.

About the war, I don't see how it can go on after the end of the year, I really don't. On the other hand there is always the possibility of Germany giving a knock-out blow to Italy or Russia, and prolonging things into next year. Got back at six and came into my room to change my clothes and polished the brass on my straps.

18 *April. Glasgow.* I arrived at Aberdeen on Thursday afternoon and went round to see the local Military and Recruiting people and then went out to tea with Sir George Adam Smith, the Principal of Aberdeen University. Found him such a charming man.

*April. Dundee.* It is snowing outside. There is a wonderful old four-poster bed with green brocade trimmings. I was busy interviewing recruits all day. I picked out fifty and selected twenty-five. I only arrived at Dundee after ten at night, it was raining and there was sleet and I was the only first-class passenger. I got two porters to carry my two big bags and we had to walk half-a-mile along unlighted streets.

25 *April. Aberdeen.* I interviewed thirty-five candidates at the recruiting office to-day and selected nineteen. The steamer has just got in from Bergen with a number of Russian refugees\* on board and they looked rather bewildered as they stood in the front hall of the hotel. I was able to interpret for them, which pleased them, poor things they looked very forlorn. I wonder when they will be able to return to Russia?

25 *April. Inverness.* I opened my paper and saw that the Germans had sunk fifty-five of our ships last week. This is much the worst week we have had.

At the railway station here I had to report myself as this is a special military area and I had to get a permit.

\* The Russian Revolution took place on 12th March, and the Tsar abdicated three days later.



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27 April. *Inverness*. I drove round to the recruiting office at the Barracks of the Camerons, and was there all the morning. I interviewed nineteen recruits and selected thirteen. The Camerons have a very nice lot of officers and I lunched in Mess. They were very friendly. We had excellent Scotch broth, various meats, sweets and masses of scones and cakes. No food shortage here! They nearly always assume that I am a pilot when talking to me, and as I hate sailing under false pretences I always straight away say that I am on the administrative side as it is much easier to say the unpleasant thing at the beginning.

One of the would-be recruits that I interviewed came from the island of Barra in the Outer Hebrides, which you will see on your map. He was only just able to speak English!

*Back in Glasgow*. Howick asked me if there was anything special I would like to do as it was Saturday afternoon. I suggested trying to see some town-planning. We went round to consult the Town Clerk, then to see a kind of home for fathers with children, whose wives are dead. The men go to work and are able to leave their children during the day-time to be looked after. There was rather a feeling of it being an institution and I was very sorry for the children.

All this poverty and squalor is terribly depressing and people seem so indifferent about it. If only the nation would give the same enthusiasm to fighting the slums as it does to fighting the enemy! Spent all the evening doing my Overseas work.

*Monday, 1 May*. Very busy day at the office, there was a lot of filling up of records to do in connection with my trip up north last week. I always find this class of office work so trying, anything without initiative always gives me that caged-in feeling which I had at Lloyds years ago.

3 May. *Edinburgh*. Howick and I walked out to interview people at two of the largest schools in Edinburgh, each over a thousand strong. It is getting more difficult to get recruits for the R.F.C. now.

*Sunday, 6 May. Glasgow*. Last night at 9 o'clock I went out for half-an-hour as I wanted to see what Glasgow looked like on a Saturday night. I walked along Argyle Street for about a mile. It was one mass of people and reminded me of the Whitechapel Road. I counted thirty-five men drunk, but on the whole that was not as bad as I had expected. Still it made me very unhappy.

Up on your hill-top must be lovely now, with the blue irises, the cedars, and the distant mountains, especially at evening time.

7 May. *Dundee*. I went for a stroll and found such a fascinating old graveyard with fifteenth and sixteenth century tombs. I walked about among the old graves and tried to imagine the kind of problems those people had to face, very different from ours to-day!

I then came back to the hotel, a very second-rate place, and am writing this in the Commercial room with the commercial travellers busy writing out their day's orders—it reminded me of my postcard days.

7 May. *Dundee*. It is bitterly cold and there are no fires. I sat reading downstairs after dinner in my overcoat. The discomfort of some of these provincial hotels in Great Britain is beyond belief. I wonder what my American friends would say.

*Wednesday, 9 May. Dundee*. Staying in this hotel is just like being in one of those places overseas in the back-blocks. I read *The Student in Arms* after dinner.

9 May. *Glasgow*. While I was waiting for the recruits to come back from the Medical Board I got into conversation with one of the women social workers here, a very capable person who does a lot of police visiting. She gave me an awful account of the women drinking and the way they go out with other men when their husbands are away. She also told me about a woman who was arrested yesterday because one of her children was missing. The police subsequently found the bones in a coal cellar!

(*Letters.*)

Three days later I was wired for by the Air Board, and on reporting at the Hotel Cecil was instructed to complete my course of training at Reading so that I could join the staff of Colonel Jenkins at the Air Ministry in six weeks' time. I was sorry to say goodbye to Howick, one of the nicest chiefs a man could work under. But the Air Ministry seemed to think that my new job would give me greater scope.

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# Chapter XVI

## BACK AT SCHOOL

MAY—JUNE, 1917

BEING A BOY AGAIN—MILITARY AERONAUTICS AT READING—  
THE QUESTION OF HONOURS

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# Chapter XVI

## BACK AT SCHOOL

### BEING A BOY AGAIN

ONE of my last memories of Glasgow was of an officer being seen off for the front after his leave by his wife at the station. Poor woman, she could not control her grief and the tears splashed down on her bag. She was too demented to trouble about appearances and looked as if her heart would break. He was equally moved but kept swallowing down his grief. They were quite oblivious of their surroundings although he glanced repeatedly at the clock. I turned my eyes away at the final parting. . . . Poor things. I often wondered whether he ever came back. Those two were just enacting a drama of war that was taking place every day at thousands of railway stations throughout Europe.

After reporting at the Air Board on Friday morning I was given a week-end's leave and found myself back at my flat in Victoria Street as an ordinary mortal with four days to spare, so I was able to bring myself up-to-date at the Overseas Club. In London I noticed a marked increase in the number of women employed in men's jobs. The lamps were being lit by a woman lamp-lighter in a neat blue ulster who left a trail of subdued lights behind her. There were many women ticket-collectors on the Underground. At St. James's Park station the official on duty filled in spare moments doing Irish crochet. But all work and no play makes Jill a dull girl and there were happy interludes spent chatting and laughing with Australian and New Zealand soldiers who frequented Westminster.

87, Victoria Street, S.W.1.

Friday, 11 May, 1917.

Round to the Air Board. I went first to Major Freeman. He could not have been nicer and said they were very pleased with

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the work I had done in Scotland and they did not wish to lose me there, but that in my own interests they thought I ought to go to Reading.

He then instructed me to go to Reading on Monday afternoon and learn all I can about aeroplanes, and he said he would write specially to the Commandant about me. He did not tell me how long they want me to remain there but I don't think it will be more than four weeks.

87, Victoria Street, London, S.W.1.

Monday, 14 May, 1917.

All the fruit trees are in blossom and there were such masses of lovely orange tulips in that garden in Vincent Square.

As I had a spare day before going to Reading I went to Richmond Park. Near the top of the hill I sat under an apple tree in blossom and wrote my Overseas notes. Then I walked along the top of the Park by the "Star and Garter" and could see all the poor men lying in the wards. Inside the Park there were family parties with soldier sons or brothers back on leave from the front.  
(*Letters.*)

On Monday afternoon after this brief interlude I went to Reading for the third and last time and reported myself for duty at the School of Military Aeronautics. Here I remained for five weeks till I had finished my condensed course of instruction. While in Scotland I was a cog in the military machine, but in my recruiting work I was my own master and the daily time-table was arranged to suit me. I spent long hours each day interviewing an endless stream of young men of eighteen or nineteen who were seeking commissions as pilots. I was the frightening individual, the master, the representative of the military machine upon whom their destiny depended. If I considered the candidate was suitable I filled in a form and sent him to the Medical Officer. When passed I filled more forms and gave him a chit instructing him to report at Halton Camp or some other centre for training. Now the rôles were reversed. I was back at school. I was the frightened subordinate whose fate depended on some alarming representative of the military hierarchy. I was the new boy!

During my five weeks at Reading I thought less about the war than at any other period before or after. I became a human robot. Every moment in the day was filled. I slept six hours, I ate heartily, I drilled and marched, I bicycled or walked from class to class, I dealt with my private correspondence, and in my few spare hours during the first three weeks I had to mug up the week's work that I had missed, so as to be ready for the examination. Beyond glancing at headlines I had no time for newspapers. At the week-ends one of my colleagues from the Overseas Club usually came down so that I could polish off correspondence and keep in touch with the office. Pilots and observers were constantly coming back from the front and we heard the latest war gossip about "the mutiny in the French army," "Nivelle's push mis-carrying," "the *poilu* being fed up to the teeth."\*

Despite the hard work it was a healthy life and at the taxpayers' expense I received a training in the mysteries of aeroplane construction and internal combustion engines. I lived in a world of new surroundings and I dealt with unaccustomed terms: fuselage, camber, tappets, differential. I fear the taxpayer got bad value for his money because I never had a mechanical turn of mind, and despite the fact that I had been a car owner in 1904 every time I went out alone on my Panhard in those days—and ever since—was more or less of an adventure. I never knew what would happen if anything went wrong with the mysterious mechanism. I envied some of my brother-officers who had a flair for mechanics and were as much at home taking Leyland lorries and Crossley tenders to pieces as I was running an organisation or conducting a public meeting. The chief lesson I learnt at Reading was

\* For a good account of France's troubles in 1917 see *A History of the War*, Cruttwell; p. 413-417. "All through May and June the troubles multiplied. Outbreaks were reported from sixteen of the French Army Corps. At one time it was reported that only two divisions were wholly trustworthy on the whole front between Soissons and Rheims." . . . "The determination not to be led any longer to useless slaughter by incompetent commanders was the strongest of all motives." . . . "The awful disillusionment of April." Pétain "had not merely to retrieve a defeat but to prevent the disintegration of the Army."

obedience. You were a unit in the State and personal predilection must not count. Drawing sketches of pistons and propellers and polishing buckles on Sam Browne belts is good character-building. Like the Jesuit, after years of training you find yourself back doing elementary tasks with an outside authority taking charge of every minute of the day. Mr. H. G. Wells believes in a "planned world." I was living in a planned world on a small scale, in which the human unit was of no importance.

Another lesson I learnt at Reading was to hold my fellows in even higher regard. Since leaving school in 1899 I had primarily worked with those older than myself. Back at school at Reading I felt like a boy again and I realised anew how much boy there is in man. My brother-officers were nice fellows. There was not nearly as much "smut" talked as there had been at a public school. With a couple of exceptions no one made a practice of telling dirty stories.

Women hardly entered into our lives. We were too busy for the most part, although some of my brother officers indulged in female society at the week-ends. Apart from seeing my sister one Sunday afternoon, and dining with the Assistant Commandant and his charming wife, I only talked to one woman in the five weeks. I was cycling slowly uphill from class along an avenue of chestnuts in bloom, laburnum and lilac. Riding along in the same direction was a young woman. How we got into conversation I cannot remember. Perhaps it was her Aberdeen that she was taking out for his afternoon exercise who was responsible! For ten minutes we rode along together and as we neared "St. Pats" I saluted and we parted. Two days later at the same place the same young lady was languidly riding along without her dog! More conversation. Was it my military bearing that was alluring? I do not know. Anyhow, after a few minutes she asked me, "Do you ever go out punting at the week-ends? It is great fun." I returned an evasive answer and in future decided to cycle another

way home from class or in company with my brother-officers. Some weeks later, after leaving Reading, I was spending a Saturday afternoon up the river with a friend. In the garden was my young lady having tea with an officer from "St. Pats." She seemed to be enjoying herself.

### MILITARY AERONAUTICS AT READING

Extracts from letters written at St. Patrick's Hall, Reading, describe my life during these five weeks :

*Monday evening, 14 May.* I start work to-morrow morning, just the same course as before. No one is billeted out now as last time and we are all at one central place called St. Patrick's Hall. My original three friends are still here and I am to share my room with F. W. Memory of the *Daily Mail*, a very nice fellow. There is a high wooden partition dividing the room into two so I shall be more or less private and it makes all the difference being with someone I know.

St. Patrick's Hall is a new brick building looking on to a courtyard of green grass. In ordinary times it is a hostel of Reading University. One great thing about being up here is that morning parade is just outside and one is certain not to be late! There is a lovely view over rolling fields and no houses are to be seen. We are on the edge of the town.

*9.35 p.m., 14 May.* I am writing this with the others walking about the room. They are all talking. I fear I shall never be alone as they all use each other's bedrooms as sitting-rooms. They are all very friendly and decent fellows, but if only I could escape occasionally! I get up and have my bath at 5.45 before the others. The window is wide open above my head. All the going to and from the lectures takes so much time.

*Tuesday, 15 May.* I am sitting on my camp-bed with the others talking all round, and trying to write is no easy matter. It is just after luncheon and I am munching a biscuit. One of the others is making coffee for all of us, which is very good of him. It is just like being at school only with not nearly as much spare time as we used to have at Eton.



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Parade is at a quarter-to-seven till a quarter-to-eight. We perspire freely. The fruit trees are simply wonderful, I have never seen anything like the blossom this year.

*Later.* I am now writing in the Common Room, there are twelve other officers sitting round reading papers. It is a quarter past seven and in about ten minutes a bell goes and we all line up in the passage. I am getting quite reconciled to the life. All this week I am doing aeroplane engines in class and next week about those big motor lorries one sees in the streets and then about the rigging of an aeroplane.

*Wednesday, 16 May, 5 a.m.* The two others are snoring and I am sitting up in my bed writing. It is rather dark and I can hardly see the paper. Very soon after 5 the orderlies and people start moving about. I had a bath last night while all the others from this landing were having a heated argument about aeroplane engines, about eight of them in all. The bathroom is quite nice and one can always get hot water. I was tired so I just calmly got into bed at 10 while they were all talking and smoking strong cigars. Despite the noise I went to sleep though I don't believe they stopped talking till nearly 11.

I get absolutely no time for reading the papers and I just read the head-lines. I don't know how I shall manage to do my *Overseas* July Magazine.

*Thursday, 17 May.* I consulted the Adjutant about whether I should continue to edit *Overseas* and he explained the Army regulations on the subject. It is such a lengthy business trying to get permission and submitting everything one writes so I shall ask F. A. Mackenzie, who is a Canadian, to look after things till I get back.

*Thursday 17 May.* The fruit trees are really wonderful. This morning it was raining, so instead of drill at 6.45 we went for a route march in mackintoshes. There is something rather exhilarating in swinging along the road in step.

*At Reading Club, 18 May.* I have asked Chaplin to come down to-morrow afternoon so that I can dictate a lot of my letters to him and polish off my *Overseas* work on Saturday afternoon.

*Saturday, 19 May.* I have got quite accustomed to the life and it will seem quite strange to think of not being disciplined every moment of the day. This afternoon at 2.30 I met Chaplin at the Ship Hotel and had such a bundle of *Overseas* letters to give him.

I worked away till 5.30. Owing to the fact that I missed eight days in the course, as all the others started on the Monday of the week before me, I have been badly handicapped and I don't know how I shall ever pass the exams. Anyhow, it means "cramming" every evening so I really haven't a spare moment.

I am writing this early on Sunday morning, there is a heavy feel in the air but the chorus of the birds has been wonderful.

*Sunday, 20 May.* Last night after dinner I had meant to work but Memory wanted me to go for a stroll so we went for an hour's walk, getting back at 10. I was tired and had to work till 11.30 "cramming."

*Sunday afternoon.* After breakfast we had Church Parade at 9.15 and we marched to Church, after Church went with several of the others "to go over" some of the engines again. I am writing this after lunch and on the other side of the partition another fellow is snoring! Next week one of the schools, where we have to go for lectures, is a long way off so I have got a bicycle, it ought to save me a lot of time—it is a ramshackle machine and every now and then the chain comes off.

*Monday, 21 May.* I am going to have extra special tuition in aeroplane engines to catch up the work that I missed during those eight days, when I was still in Scotland. This week we are learning all about the rigging and the wings of aeroplanes and it is quite interesting. I find my bicycle very handy.

*Tuesday, 22 May.* I cycled back and then worked till dinner and then after dinner as well. I don't know nearly all the various subjects that we have been through and if I do have to enter the exam. I don't know how I shall manage to pass it!

I hear that Mrs. Lloyd George is being entertained at the Overseas Club to-day.

*Tuesday, 23 May.* After dinner last evening four of us went for an hour's walk. It was such a lovely evening. I saw the new moon, such a beautiful silver sickle.

*Empire Day.* At lunch-time I heard from Walter Long saying that he has recommended me for the C.M.G. for my Overseas Club work and it made me very happy. It will not be publicly announced till the King's Birthday. You know that the initials mean "Companion of St. Michael and St. George."

*Friday, 25 May.* In the distance a Beethoven sonata is being played while I am writing. Another evening walk last night. I

walked on ahead by myself and was alone with my thoughts. Outwardly not since being at Summer Fields have I been so little master of my time. It is so extraordinary being just a pawn in the game and being liable to be moved about at any moment.

*Sunday, 27 May.* After 11 o'clock class yesterday I went to the Engine schools and spent quite 1½ hours going over them by myself. I still feel rather at sea about them and as the exam. is at the end of this week for the first four subjects I shall have to work very hard. You remember I told you that they were (1) Aeroplane engines; (2) Rigging, which means all about wings, tail, wires, in fact everything which is not engine: I was present all that week and feel I know the subject fairly well; (3) Crossley motor-car. I missed that week completely. I have only had 1½ hours' private instruction on it. I am going to have two hours' private instruction this morning and possibly an hour or so during the week but even then I will only have a very superficial knowledge of it. And then (4) the big Leyland motor-lorry. I shall miss to-morrow, Monday, as I am Orderly Officer.

I do hope I shall pass. All these next six days I shall have to work every spare moment I can. Being Orderly Officer is rather a nuisance as you have to go round and inspect the four barracks where the men live, and on Monday night I have to sleep at a place called Wantage Hall near where we drill in the morning.

Several of us were out on the river from 3 till 10.30 yesterday. It really was lovely and we dined at a place called Tilehurst about three miles up the river. While moored to a bank we ran over exam. questions together. The country was looking very lovely with fields of buttercups. Seeing the buttercups reminded me of Little Gidding; only there were no lambs.

*Monday, 28 May.* I am sitting in the Orderly Room at Wantage Hall where I shall sleep to-night. Wantage Hall is part of the University in ordinary times and was given to the town by Lady Wantage. It is now the place where all the pilots and observers sleep. This room by day is a smoking-room and the Orderly Officer's bed is made up in it at 11 o'clock and of course it reeks of stale tobacco. I only sleep one night here and am off duty in twenty-four hours' time. I have to cycle about twenty-four miles during the day, changing guard, etc.

*Monday evening.* For two hours I have been doing my exam. notes and trying to commit them to memory and in twenty minutes' time I shall have to go off on my rounds again. I had to get up at 4.30, then round to see the men at their breakfast in three different parts of the town.

Then had to change guard, from 9 till 11 worked on my notes, then on my rounds again. I dropped asleep doing my notes after lunch. All the rest of the day I have been grinding at these notes.

Anyhow this evening from 6.30 to 10 I shall be able to work, then the rounds finally for the night, turning out the Guard at 10.45 and then bed in the smoking room and I am off duty at 5.30 to-morrow morning.

*Wednesday evening.* Just back on my bicycle from lecture on flight. I have had a very difficult day on motor-engines and my brain seems in absolute chaos. I don't feel any confidence in passing and all the time they keep referring to things which were taught during the eight days I missed. I have missed exactly one-third of all the instruction.

*Saturday, 2 June.* The exams. are over. I did three of the four papers quite fairly and should pass in them, but the one on aeroplane engines I did not do at all well and only hope I passed. From now on I shall be working level. You can't imagine what a weight it takes off me.

*Monday, 4 June.* After the afternoon class three of the other fellows asked me to come in a car to Sonning, about  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles away. It was all looking so beautiful and such a dear little hotel with garden and Dorothy Perkins roses and creepers growing over the windows and all the meadows were yellow with buttercups and there were big ox-eye daisies.

At lunch-time I got the tailor here to put my C.M.G. ribbon on my jacket. After lunch various people saw it and congratulated me. I like it coming on the 4th June.

*Wednesday, 6 June.* You can't imagine what my room gets like by the end of the day. Many of them practically come and live here and the whole place is littered with cigar ends and they smoke incessantly. Last night I walked for nearly an hour with a French-Canadian and tried to get him to understand my views about the Empire. At meals now I have a Scotsman who has travelled all over the world on one side, and a very nice Australian pilot on the other, and we talk of interesting things.

*Thursday, 7 June.* Northcliffe has gone to America, as head of the British Mission to succeed Arthur Balfour.

In addition to learning about stores to-day we had some instruction about bombs. I have just been dining with the Assistant Commandant. They were married two years ago and seem very

happy, she is pretty and I liked her. On the mantelpiece of his room is a photograph of her signed "Your devoted wife."

*Saturday evening.* I have passed my exam. ! I really did not do badly. I got an "Excellent" in Leyland, "Very good" in Rigging, "Good" in the other two subjects, which is better than I had hoped for.

*11 June.* Just been for an hour's walk with my French-Canadian friend. I much enjoy talking to him. He was telling me about a Trappist Monastery near Montreal. Talking to him is like a breath of fresh air, it keeps me linked up with the Empire.

The prospects for the Irish Convention look good and I expect it was a wise move letting out the prisoners.

This air raid seems to have been bad and I hear that London has been very panic-stricken. It will certainly mean that the Flying Corps will be expanded all the time.

*Sunday, 17 June.* I have got to be at Buckingham Palace at 10 a.m. on Wednesday the 20th to receive my C.M.G. from the King. Had a nice letter from Colonel Jenkins. He says :

My dear W., Unfortunately the mid-summer Honours List escaped my notice and I have only just been informed that in this list you were down for the C.M.G. I therefore hasten to tender you my heartiest congratulations and tell you how glad I am that your valuable services have been recognised.

I shall, needless to say, be most proud to have a Second-Lieutenant holding so high a distinction. I am now beginning to think it is just about time that you finished with your Course at Reading and took up your new duties in this branch. Will you write me as soon as convenient letting me know how long you have been at Reading, what subjects you have passed through and when you anticipate having to sit for your exam. as I am anxious to get you in this office at the earliest possible moment.

Sincerely yours,  
F.C.J.

### THE QUESTION OF HONOURS

When the veil fell from my eyes and I looked upon the world with a scale of new values I made up my mind that I would never accept honours or decorations if they came my way.

But sometimes in life human beings are inconsistent. I was inconsistent about my C.M.G. I accepted it gratefully and thus explained my inconsistency to myself. It set a seal on my work as a civilian when starting my military career. People are affected by externals. With the red and blue ribbon on my chest the military hierarchy and my superior officers would not think that I had been shirking my duty. The second reason was a more personal one. Ever since I fell under the spell of Ruskin, St. George—although I was somewhat vague as to which of the various St. Georges was our national patron and I could never get a clear-cut picture of the Saint—was for me the leader of all who were striving for a better world. To be a “companion” of St. George was irresistible. Probably in addition to these reasons there was also a recrudescence of the old ambition that in my youthful days had mapped out a dazzling career and that had lain dormant for many years. Besides I was now caught up in a life in which externals were everything. One “pip” on the uniform meant subservience and endless clicking of heels and saluting. The way to freedom lay through obtaining three “pips” and ultimately even a “crown”! I accepted my C.M.G. with gratitude and felt a tingling sensation in my veins—no doubt like Tchekhov’s hero Kutsyn—when the Commandant’s eyes were arrested by my ribbon at an inspection. In the Army C.M.G.’s were not given to anyone below the rank of Colonel.

But my fundamental views on the whole system of honour-giving and the selling of titles has never changed. I advocated the setting-up of an Honours Board, absolutely impartial, that would investigate all claims and would itself seek out those deserving recognition. I hoped that after the war titles would no longer be sold for contributions to the secret Party Funds.

Such was our idealism in the war years that we sincerely believed that when peace came such glaring abuses as the selling of honours would be abolished in the glorious days of reconstruction that lay ahead. I have often

thought that all who get infected with a craving for outward recognition should read Anton Tchekhov's story *The Lion and the Sun*. With a touch of genius Tchekhov describes Stefan Ivanovitch Kutsyn, the Mayor of a little town on "this side of the Urals." When Rahat Helam, the Persian grandee, arrived Kutsyn realised the moment of his dreams had come. He yearned to add a Persian order to these medals he already possessed. He wined and dined his oriental friend, he fed him on sturgeon and champagne. They spent the evening listening to harp-players in the London Hotel. In due course after long delays the coveted "Lion and the Sun" order arrived. It was in the Russian winter, the thermometer was below zero—but no matter—Stefan Ivanovitch strutted about with his fur coat open and his ribboned breast exposed. Alas, there were no passers-by. Let Tchekhov conclude his story: "He felt heavy at heart. There was a burning sensation inside him, and his heart throbbed uneasily: he had a longing now to get a Serbian order. It was a painful, passionate longing."

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## Chapter XVII

### AT THE AIR BOARD

JUNE—NOVEMBER, 1917

WORKING AT THE HOTEL CECIL—AMERICA “ARRIVES”—  
ALBERT, EARL GREY—DAILY AIR RAIDS

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# Chapter XVII

## AT THE AIR BOARD

### WORKING AT THE HOTEL CECIL

I LEFT Reading on 19 June, 1917.

87, Victoria Street.

You will be surprised to hear from me back in London! Just as I was coming out of class at  $\frac{1}{4}$  to 12 to-day I was instructed to return to London as the Air Board wanted me. I can't tell you what a relief it is to have left Reading and be back here one's own master. I at once went to the Air Board and saw Colonel Jenkins, who was extremely nice to me. I start in to-morrow morning.  
(Letter.)

I celebrated my release by a dinner at Scott's, in Coventry Street, consisting of lobster and devilled chicken washed down by Burgundy. A welcome change after the monotony of "St. Pats." After office hours I was a free man. In my most sanguine moments I had never expected to find myself back in London, within five minutes of the Overseas Club office in Aldwych!

For the next six months I was on the staff of the Directorate of Aircraft Acceptance at the Air Board—or the Military Aeronautics Directorate—then quartered at the Hotel Cecil. My immediate chief was Colonel F. Conway Jenkins,\* not yet thirty, who had had phenomenal promotion and was one of the youngest departmental heads in the Service. Our branch was an important one. It collected the completed aeroplanes from the manufacturers and flew them to Lympne and then "ferried" them over to G.H.Q. in France.

My job, when I had learnt the ropes, was to take charge of the "Ferry" pilots and arrange with them their duties.

\* A few months later he became Brigadier-General.

They were a splendid lot of young men of from nineteen to twenty-three or four. For the time being some of them were doing light duty, probably after a crash in France. Here in the vast Hotel Cecil, with its thousand or so rooms and a huge staff, they brought with them the atmosphere of the battle area. Doubtless this continually expanding staff was essential to keep pace with the tremendous development in the Air Force. Of the many jobs that Jenkins gave me to do there was none that I liked better than being in charge of the Ferry Pilots. They were heroes everyone of them. To listen to their modest and unvarnished accounts of "strafing the Hun" was an unforgettable experience. To flaunt death was part of the daily round. I never got over the feeling that they at least should have had a special uniform to differentiate them from the rest of us who spent our lives on the ground. For every flying-man in the Air Force there was a large ground personnel.

I had never been in a big Government Department before and it was some time before I grew accustomed to the functioning of the bureaucratic machine. My only previous experience of a Government office—I do not count recruiting in Scotland—had been as a boy when I had sat working at shorthand, modern history and languages, in my father's office at the Irish Land Commission in Dublin after leaving Eton. Twelve years in Northcliffe's service was not a good preparation for becoming a mere cog in the war machine. I found it difficult to accustom myself to the endless circulating of minutes. The cumbrous method of writing minutes in one's own hand was surprising to me. I recalled the scorn with which Northcliffe had talked of Lord Curzon and of Moberley Bell of *The Times*, "who sat at their desks writing endless letters with their own hand," instead of dictating them.

No one seemed authorised to do anything of his own volition. Your good bureaucrat obtained a sheet of foolscap and addressed it to A.D.D.M.A.D. Then a

request or suggestion would be entered. He would add to his name some mysterious lettering such as A.D.D.A.A. I lived in a nightmare of initials to which I never grew accustomed. The document was put into a "jacket"—a folder of thick paper. Then the fun started. The jacket would commence its rounds. It wandered from room to room, from floor to floor, from department to department of the Hotel Cecil.

I often wondered how many human beings during the war were occupied filling in needless forms and conveying them from department to department. Perhaps in Carmelite House we had been brought up in too slap-dash methods. If we wanted information we rang up the head of the department concerned and got it there and then. No doubt many of the matters under consideration at the Air Board had to be committed to paper but many had not. If Mr. Selfridge had been in control his fertile mind would have thought out some system for speeding-up and simplifying our work—perhaps a phonograph or some other contraption into which a robot would record all the requests and suggestions for future reference! By the time the jacket returned to the sender, after its peregrinations round our labyrinths, we had almost forgotten its existence.

We worked long hours—from 9.30 to 7.0 every day, Saturdays included; at lunch-time I usually fitted in a twenty-minute visit to the Overseas Club after eating at Gow's in the Strand or at Groom's in Fleet Street. As a treat I would sometimes lunch at a favourite haunt since my postcard days, *Les Gourmets* in Lisle Street, where Madame Cosson always had a friendly word and where Baptiste the white rabbit would scuttle about unconcernedly between the feet of *les clients*.

By now I was quite accustomed to uniform. I thought of my boyhood's German officer friends whose military bearing I had then envied and I tried to emulate their deportment. There was no second-lieutenant who clicked his heels louder or stood more correctly to attention when

he was passed by a superior officer in the passages of our huge office.

Soon after I went to the Air Board the Foreign Office applied for my services for its Propaganda Department and perhaps I would have been well-advised to have tried to get a transfer. But my chiefs were determined to keep me. A great expansion was taking place in the Air Force in 1917. In July I received a second "pip" and within five months of arriving at the Hotel Cecil I was gazetted a Captain.

Departments grew almost overnight. Conway Jenkins, my immediate chief, was now a Brigadier-General. Envious glances were cast at him by pukka soldiers. How had a motorist who had taken up flying as a young man in 1910 become a General before he was 30? But Jenkins was a good organiser, and a considerate chief who inspired his subordinates with confidence and he never spared himself.\* There was great elation when we learnt that a big scheme of expansion was going through and that we would all move up in the hierarchy. From being E.O.3's and 2's we became E.O.1's; the lucky were even able to adorn their tunics with red tabs. We pored over blue prints showing the future organisation of our Directorate throughout the country. Every head of a department wanted to outdo his neighbour. Happy indeed was he who had three G.S.O.1's under him while his rival had only two! If you were sufficiently important you could wangle the use of a Crossley tender—my old friend of the exams, at Reading. There was also the prospect of being whirled through the streets of London by an attractive chauffeuse. But woe betide any officer below the rank of Colonel who tried to get into friendly converse with the goddess *ex machina*! There were no good mornings with a bewitching smile for the likes of him.

\* The last time I saw him was early in 1934 when he came to ask my help in connection with his work. He was Managing Director of the British agency for selling Chrysler cars. A few months later I read of his death in the press.

Increasing importance was now attached to the air service. Mr. Lloyd George's magnetic personality was making itself felt. He was determined to develop the Air Force to the utmost. We all shared in the growing influence of the Royal Flying Corps. We were no longer the Cinderella of the Services. When we wanted to ring up Acceptance Parks and Aerodromes we demanded a "priority call." Ordinary telephone users had to become accustomed in war-time to having their conversations cut short. It was curious to lead a double existence: during the day as part of the military machine with its trappings and privileges; in the evening as the organiser of an Empire movement.

### AMERICA ARRIVES

After my military duties in the day, dealing with pilots, aeroplanes and aircraft stores, I would find myself in the evenings at the Overseas Office discussing infant welfare,\* War Savings or one of our many schemes; or perhaps I would be absorbed in making plans for launching my British-American organisation when the psychological moment arrived. I note in my diary that on 8 July, 1917, I was reading to my cousin "my detailed notes about my American scheme." My mind was occupied with things American and the increasing importance of a close British-American understanding. I do not think there was a day till the English-Speaking Union was launched in July, 1918, that I did not give the matter serious thought.

It was quite natural that all my latent enthusiasm for America and my belief in the mission of the English-Speaking Peoples should increasingly dominate my waking thoughts. On 26 June, a week after I started work at the Air Board, the first contingent of American troops landed

\* See reference to the starting of the "Babies of the Empire" on page 257.

in France. From now on there came a growing advance-guard of long-limbed Americans belonging to the various military and naval organisations being established in London. A red-letter occasion for me was the first sight of an American officer walking along Pall Mall—dressed in khaki. In the distance he looked like a British officer but on closer inspection he wore an unfamiliar tunic. Our meeting was within a stone's throw of the house where George the Third was born in St. James's Square. In the American I seemed to see the herald of the new age when the British and American peoples would forget past feuds. One of the chief tenets of my Faith was that our two peoples must in future act in unison for the world's welfare.

Some extracts from letters written during this period follow :

*Saturday, 7 July, 1917.* We had a very exciting time of it this morning. At about 25 past 10 I was in Colonel Jenkins' room when suddenly we heard firing, so he jumped up and we dashed to the window and there were 25 German aeroplanes, looking as if they were coming straight for us. They were quite close. Our guns were firing at them but they seemed to be missing them. At once the order was given for us to go down to the basement, not a very heroic procedure for the headquarters of the Flying Service! And we all went down there for about twenty minutes and then came back.

Jenkins sent for me to tell me that the War Office had applied for my services in their propaganda department and that he was going to see General Henderson about it. I told him that I had written saying that I was sure that the Air Board would not release me.

*Sunday, 22 July, 1917.* On Tuesday Jenkins sent for me and told me that when Captain Skipper was away he was going to put me in charge of his department, which would give me plenty of chances to show how I could do, and he promised if I did well that he would shove me on. Skipper has been away for the last three days and as a result I have been frightfully busy and really interested in my work. On Friday, Sir David Henderson sent for me to find out just what work I was doing and he said the Foreign Office were still trying to get me but that he was not going to let me go, as

the work I was doing was important and there would be plenty of scope for me.

When I was at Church this morning I heard bombs, though I can't find out if there was an air raid.

This letter to my Mother tells of my first flight :

We left the Air Board by car at mid-day on Saturday. We lunched in mess at Kenley Aircraft Park, which is one of our aerodromes. We started immediately afterwards. The wind had got up and it was clouded-over, which was a pity and the machine rocked a little on the ground. It was what is called an "F.E." and I sat right in front in the "nacelle," in the very nose of the plane, in front of the pilot and the engine. I was dressed up in goggles and a flying cap pulled over my head—it just gives an opening for the nose and eyes, a very thick leather coat and padded gloves. Then I was strapped in by a big band, like a horse's girth, so there was no fear of moving about. Then the Colonel said "Let her go" and off we went; first of all we "taxied" or ran along the aerodrome and then we turned and started to go up as he turned his engine fully on. It is extraordinary how quickly one climbs and one has a great sense of power. I did not like the sensation of "banking" or turning in the air and it makes you feel rather uncomfortable!

Up and up we climbed till we were 4,000 feet up and then we followed the South Eastern railway line. We were just under the clouds and it was quite chilly. One gets a marvellous view of the country and it is just like looking at the world from outside. It all seemed very far off and very grey. Before we had been going more than fifteen minutes the Colonel shouted down his speaking tube "Do you see the sea?" and there it was in the distance; we could see from the mouth of the Thames to Winchelsea.

Then he flew right out to sea over Folkestone and we looked down on the destroyers crossing the Channel. One could easily recognise them by the wash they made. I liked the sensation of being above the sea.

*Sunday, 29 July, 1917.* I went to lunch with Lady Grey and was taken up to see Lord Grey\* afterwards. He was being taken off the following day to Leeds for an internal operation. I was dreadfully shocked by his appearance. I thought him looking very frail and ill and all the life gone out of him, but he was very friendly.

Things seem dreadfully bad in Russia and I am afraid it will prolong the war.

\* Albert, Earl Grey.



I know you will be very pleased to hear that we have now got £10,350 for the R.F.C. hospital, so we managed it in less than the time we tried for.

*Sunday, 19 August, 1917. Ewburst, Surrey.* It is the first night I have slept out of London since I was at Reading and it is very resting. The country all round here is perfectly lovely and two miles away is a hill one mass of purple heather. As I was sitting out-of-doors reading the *Observer* I could distinctly hear the "throbs" of the guns in Flanders!

### ALBERT EARL GREY—INSPIRER OF YOUNG MEN

*Sunday, 5 August, 1917. 87 Victoria Street.* The weather this last week has really been beyond words: it has rained continuously. I am afraid it must have affected our offensive.

You probably saw that we presented eight more aeroplanes to the Government on the 4th August.

Did I tell you that Geoffrey Robinson\* told me that he did not see how Lord Grey could recover and he was too bad to be operated on.

*Sunday, 2 September, 1917. Marlborough Club.* Wasn't it sad about Lord Grey? Somehow I felt sure, that last time I saw him, that I should never see him again, he looked so hollow-eyed and all the old fire gone. I have lost a very good friend.

*(Letters to parents.)*

Lord Grey's death was a great blow to me. Ever since I first stayed with him at Ottawa in 1906, when he was Governor-General of Canada, we had been warm friends. He had always taken a great interest in my work. In many ways I regarded him as the godfather of the Overseas League. I recalled with grateful remembrance his encouragement in its early days. As I sat in his library at Rideau Hall we discussed my two chief preoccupations, Empire unity and British-American Co-operation. In the early days of the Overseas Club movement, when we enrolled associates who only paid 1s., Lord Grey enrolled hundreds of leading Canadians, though I fear some of them

\* Geoffrey Dawson, editor of *The Times*.

signed on without a clear idea of what they were joining ! He cabled to me for 4,000 badges. The idea of a great brotherhood, recognising no class distinctions, appealed to him. His valet was one of our most attractive recruits.

In Lord Grey's nature there was room for many enthusiasms. He was equally ready to plunge into Empire unity, Canadian Nationalism, Public-house Reform, Co-partnership, Proportional Representation, Garden Cities or Anglo-American friendship. I sometimes wished he had not had so many enthusiasms and had concentrated on the two or three causes nearest to his heart. If he had I think he would have achieved more in his life. Perhaps this is an unfair criticism. There are some people who are apparently intended to act as inspirers in the lives of struggling mortals. They encourage and stimulate before they are caught up in some new enthusiasm. Then they pass on to do to others what they have done to you. Their varied enthusiasms are not to be curbed.

When I think of Lord Grey I recall a man of vision, a great pro-consul, a dear friend. One of the projects nearest his heart was his Dominion House, to be a great Imperial centre on the Aldwych site. In his mind's eye he saw the building dominated by a high tower. Here, year in, year out, was to burn a beacon of light, to be seen from all parts of London, to symbolise the light the British Commonwealth was to radiate in a dark world. Lord Grey's conception did not materialise. But he does not require a building to keep his memory alive among those who knew him. His infectious enthusiasm illuminated the lives of those who shared his ideals.

#### DAILY AIR RAIDS

*Sunday, 16 September, 1917. 87, Victoria Street.* I lunched with Sutton of the Amalgamated Press last week. He was not very cheerful about the war and said he did not see any prospect of it ending and that our casualties in Flanders had lately been very heavy. All the same, knowing Germany, I never expected it to be over

quickly and I do believe that in another year the German war spirit will be getting tired. No nation could go on suffering indefinitely the losses she has had.

In the autumn of 1917, during full moon, air raids became of almost daily occurrence.

*Sunday, 30 September, 1917.* Last night we had the longest bombardment we have had yet, but there are no details in the papers so far. The anti-aircraft guns started booming about 9 p.m. and went on till 10.10. The shooting got louder and louder and then died off only to come on again. I was dining at Gillingham Street and we sat on the kitchen stairs and I read aloud *Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain; and Pamela\* became so absorbed in it that she paid no attention to the noise despite the fact that the cook fainted! At 10.15 the signal "all clear" was given and it was a lovely night so I walked back.

Don't believe these stories of 30,000 American aeroplanes. It will be a good long time before we can expect anything like that number from the U.S.A.!

*Sunday, 30 September, 1917. Air Board Office.* It is my day of Sunday duty, so I brought a big batch of Overseas Club documents with me hoping to get through them, but other fellows came in and have been talking all the morning. As a result I have hardly done a thing. You know that maddening sensation when you have all your papers in front of you and people will insist on talking to you! One very nice fellow would keep on telling me stories about cannibals in Central Africa and hunting big game, which I should have been very interested in in ordinary times.

You can't imagine what peace these last three days have been without air-raids. Monday's was the worst yet, it went on 2½ hours and some bombs fell in Pimlico quite close to Victoria and made a tremendous noise.

*Sunday, 14 October, 1917. Air Board Office.* Our chief excitements have been the changes in the Air Board. From the national standpoint Salmond is a good appointment, as I believe he is a very capable man. Just think, he is only 36!

The news from Flanders has been very encouraging and if it had not been for the weather we should have done much better.

I have managed to fit in a lot of Overseas Club work this week and am well satisfied with things, though there is so much I could do

\* My small cousin aged seven, now Mrs. P. V. Pelly.

there, if I was able to devote all my time to it, that I can't help feeling how stupid it was taking me away.

*Sunday, Trafalgar Day, 1917. 87, Victoria Street.* The Zeppelin raid took place on Friday night, we were quite unprepared for it apparently! They dropped one aerial torpedo in the centre of Piccadilly Circus. It was wonderful the French bringing down four of them, but we should certainly not have let them all escape like that. I expect there will be a great outcry about it.

I lunched with Hannon, the Secretary of the Navy League, on Tuesday. He has just taken on the organising of this new society called "The Comrades of the Great War of 1914-17." It is very much on the lines of the American organisation of Civil War Veterans, which has great power in the United States, and is to link up all those who have served in this war. I was trying to see if there was any way we could work in with them overseas.

*(Letters to parents.)*

My sister thus described some of the air raids in a monthly letter to overseas friends :

Londoners have been put to the test recently by a bad series of air raids, and I confess I think we might have shown ourselves to better advantage. Our nerves have been somewhat shaken. For a week the German airmen flew across the Channel and bombed us night after night in succession and succeeded in seriously disorganising the lives of the whole population. It was a bewildering experience to find oneself miles from home and to be quite unable to get back unless one chose to walk. As soon as the signal "Take cover" is heard, one by one the taxis stop and refuse to take passengers, the buses turn out their lights and line up in some wide thoroughfare, the underground trains cease running, and the stations are darkened. And one is stranded.

I made one or two attempts to get home by tube, but gave it up, preferring to risk being hit by shrapnel in the open air to being suffocated in the heat and crush of human beings below ground. Besides, the attractions above ground are many: there is no knowing what one may not see. The star-shells for one thing, that announce the coming danger, are beautiful to watch.

*24 September, 1917.* My friendly little Irish maid came in this morning and said, "Good morning Captain, I want to congratulate you, I am very glad you have been made a Captain." Wasn't it nice of her?

Air raid warning as we started back after dining at Isola Bella

## STRUGGLE

Tried to go back by Underground. Stuck at Charing Cross for half-an-hour, no trains running. Bombs and guns. Hot draughty air. (*Diary.*)

25 September. Air raid started on my way home. Great agitation at the Flat. Everybody downstairs on the first and ground floors. No dinner.\* I waited till things got quieter and finally went across to the Pub for a scratch meal. (*Diary.*)

Further letters written at this period follow :

1 October. 7.20. Air raid. Just sitting down to dinner at Gillingham Street. Tremendous bomb close by, house shivered and shook. Ate our supper in pantry. Such an air raid, bombs all round. Lupus Street wrecked, also house by Ebury Bridge 200 yards away. Lasted three hours. Did not leave till 10 p.m.

21 October. Looked at havoc caused by the bomb at Piccadilly Circus.

29 October. Despite the full moon there was no air raid last night.

*All Saints' Day, 1917.* Last night's raid was apparently quite a big affair, 30 aeroplanes, but only three penetrated over London. It lasted from 12 to 2.15. One of the fellows at the Air Ministry saw some people blown up.

*Sunday, 11 November, 1917.* I am afraid there has not been very cheerful war news of late and I think the Allies' entire strategy will have to be revised.

General Allenby seems to be doing well, but I only hope they will do nothing rash in Palestine, before they know what force of Turks they have up against them at Aleppo.

14 November. The war looks like lasting two years at least and aircraft is getting more important all the time and is playing an increasingly big part in it.

15 November. We seem to be doing very well in Palestine and although I know it does not really affect the war as a whole, yet it always strangely thrills me. I would love if we could give it to the Jews. It would be a wonderful thing to do.

Lord Harcourt rang me up and asked me to lunch with them. I went, and he showed me the big frescoes they are having put up

\* Our dining-room was at the top of the building, on the sixth floor.

in the Lower Chapel at Eton as part of the War Memorial. He is the Chairman of the Committee. One of the pictures is rather splendid, it is supposed to be the Armies of Heaven taken from that verse in Revelations, "They were all on white horses." I love the words, "Armies of Heaven," it gives me the feeling that wind in the trees does.

16 *Friday*. It appears quite definite that Northcliffe is not coming to the Air Board. I understand that he means to be Prime Minister and is going for larger game. I wonder what Lloyd George will have to say.

21 *November*. I do not think Northcliffe's influence is growing and Carson has made an attack on him. There was good news from the British Front to-day. The Italian business has been very bad.\* I am afraid the Russian situation is hopeless. At the same time we are doing better against submarines and altogether I don't think the outlook is too bad.

*Sunday, 25 November. At Office*. The chief news as far as I am concerned is Lord Rothermere's appointment as Air Minister. I would ever so much sooner have him than his brother.

Everyone here is very pleased about Byng's victory and I only hope they will be able to extend it but it looks as if progress were going to be much slower now.

It will be wonderful if we do get into Jerusalem by Christmas and I am sure you are thrilled about it. Lady Plunket told me last night there is an Arab prophecy about a great Western race entering through the West gate on a Friday, I expect you have heard it. I dined last night with the Plunkets to discuss the Babies' scheme.

26 *November*. I was delighted to see about Rothermere's appointment as Air Minister. You see I have always been on friendly terms with him and he knew all about my controversy with his brother in connection with the Overseas Club. I don't think they could have made a better appointment. I went round to the Ritz Hotel to congratulate him. He was very nice and talked to me alone for about twenty minutes. He said he would get me to come round again. It is curious that as Chief of the Air Force he should be my Chief again. I like him and I have worked under him for twelve years. I only hope he will make use of me. I think I could tell him a lot that would help him.

27 *November*. I am told Rothermere put in his first appearance at the Air Board to-day, so whether he will remember my existence

\* Refers to Caporetto.

I don't know ! Anyhow, I shall not make any effort to see him again.

28 *November*. At the moment the spiritual side of my nature is rather dried up and I long to be "in the shadow of that living mystic tree." I have at moments in my life flashes when I see through, but latterly the dust of living has obscured my vision.

30 *November*. Rothermere sent for General Jenkins to-day and talked to him for ten minutes on the organising of his department. As he (Lord R.) has not asked to see me again I think the dignified thing for me to do is not to make any further effort to see him. He knows I am here if he wants to see me.

All this Russian news is pretty bad, about as bad as it could be. Yes, I do feel rather shaken about the war. I don't see much that is cheering. All the same I feel we shall win in the end as I believe we can stand it much better than they can, and America will only begin to be ready next spring. (*Letters.*)

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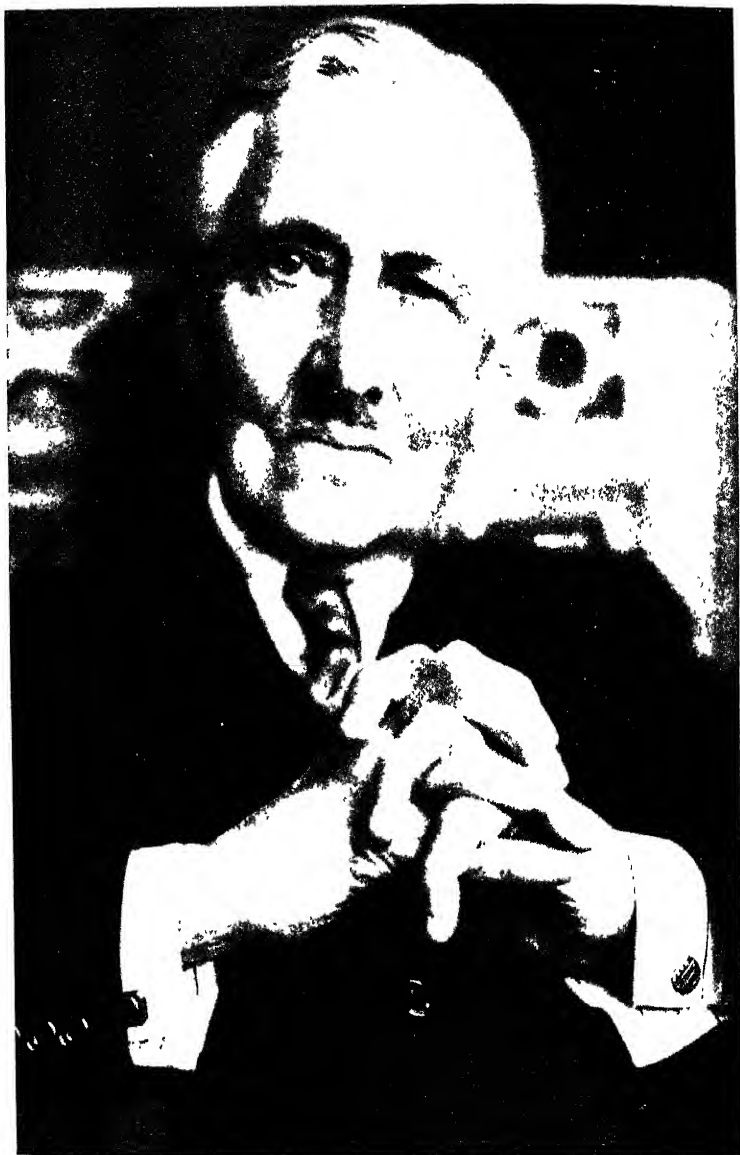


Chapter XVIII

THE BABIES OF THE EMPIRE

TRUBY KING, SAVER OF INFANTS' LIVES—WE INVITE TRUBY  
KING TO ENGLAND





*Copyright S. P. Andrew, Wellington, N.Z.*

“T.K.” to his friends—to the world: Sir Frederick Truby King.

## Chapter XVIII

### THE BABIES OF THE EMPIRE

#### TRUBY KING—SAVER OF INFANTS' LIVES

MY letters contain frequent references to Truby King,\* known to his friends as "T.K." The successful establishing of the Babies of the Empire, which took over the Marlborough School of Mothercraft in Great Britain, was a major activity of the Overseas Club in 1917-1918, and was the first important piece of social work with which we identified ourselves.

To my sister, Winifride, is primarily due the credit of introducing Truby King's methods of infant life-saving to England. My sister has never in my view received due acknowledgment for her share in this important achievement.† In 1910, the year in which I launched the Overseas Club, I first heard my sister talk of Truby King's amazing baby life-saving campaign in New Zealand. An old friend of our family, Lady Plunket,‡ who had recently returned from New Zealand as an enthusiastic believer in Dr. King's methods, told the wonderful story of how in a few years he had reduced New Zealand's infant mortality rate by nearly half. His achievement, is one of the romances of the 20th century. His name deserves to be ranked with that of Ronald Ross and other benefactors of humanity.

On arrival in New Zealand in November, 1912, I was familiar with the names of only some half-dozen New Zealanders—one of them was that of Truby King.

\* Now Sir Frederick Truby King, of Wellington, New Zealand.

† The Marlborough School of Mothercraft was largely started by my sister in 1916 and it was she who suggested that Dr. Truby King should be invited to come to Great Britain to develop the work already in existence. Subsequently she approached Lord and Lady Plunket with a view to enlisting their support. From this initial effort grew the Babies of the Empire. My father gave my sister £500 to help to start the scheme.

‡ Now Lady Victoria Braithwaite, daughter of Lord Dufferin and widow of Lord Plunket, Governor-General of New Zealand from 1904 to 1910.

When my sister and I were at Dunedin in January, 1913, our desire to meet Truby King was soon realised and one of my happiest memories is the day we spent with Dr. and Mrs. King at the Seacliff Mental Hospital. From the moment he clasped my hand with those long capable fingers and I looked into his thoughtful eyes and heard the torrent of words about his life's work I knew I was in the presence of a master mind. Just as my friend, Norman Angell, had torn the veil from my eyes in the world of politics; so in the world of nation-building Truby King opened up vistas of an Empire Health Crusade—a subject hitherto quite outside my ken.

Truby King was born at New Plymouth in New Zealand seventy-five years ago.\* After leaving school he served as a bank clerk for six years with the Bank of New Zealand and became manager of several branches before he was twenty-one. But fortunately for the world he knew that his call lay elsewhere. One day he told his father he wished to go to the old world to study medicine. His statement called forth this utterance from his father, "Well, you must be of a singularly bloodthirsty turn of mind!" However, his father made him an allowance of £150—generous for those days—and saw him through his course. Truby King went to Edinburgh for his training and subsequently served on the resident staff at Edinburgh and Glasgow Royal Infirmarys. He married a Scots-woman and returned to New Zealand, and in 1889 was appointed medical superintendent of the large Government Hospital for Mental Diseases at Seacliff, Otago. In connection with the institution there was a thousand-acre farm. When the young doctor took over the position he knew no more about farming than does the average New Zealander—which is, of course, much more than does the average young English doctor. But he threw himself with his flamelike enthusiasm into the task of improving

\* The *New Zealand Magazine*, Wellington, publishes from time to time informative articles about Sir F. Truby King and the Royal New Zealand Society for the Health of Women and Children.

the animals on the farm for the use of his patients. Truby King had a twofold aim. He was convinced that by providing his mental patients with healthy work on the farm he was giving them the occupation best suited to their troubles. In these soothing surroundings their poor diseased brains would become more normal. Secondly, as a practical and scientific farmer, he desired to produce only the best cattle, pigs, poultry and plants.

When Truby King took me round his cattle sheds, his pigsties and his poultry runs, I was in familiar surroundings, for much of my early life had been spent on my father's farms in Ireland. My father also was a scientific farmer, who had applied Mendelian theories to cattle breeding.\* On our tour of inspection, when Truby King told me that the chief secrets of his success in rearing animals were plentiful fresh air with proper ventilation and natural food, I was reminded of my father. Properly ventilated stables and cattle sheds were a *sine qua non* on his farms.

I never saw healthier animals than at Seacliff, and the patients themselves looked happy and content in their work. T.K. was equally at home among the mental patients and the livestock! He had various ingenious devices for making the work foolproof for his lunatics. A cow wearing a blue label would go into a blue label stall and was milked into a blue bucket. I was told mistakes never occurred. Careful records were kept of the animals and it was found that they readily responded to commonsense methods.

Coddling of the calves was done away with, and they were taken out of stuffy sheds and put under a simple paling verandah, open to the sun all day, but carefully sheltered from the wind. Here they slept all night in the open air, even in midwinter. Fed systematically, the calves gained on an average over 50 lbs. more in the first six months of life than they had gained previously, and, more important still, none died. Next the pigs came in for their share of attention, with the result that Seacliff carried off all the prizes at the large annual agricultural and pastoral shows held

\* In a few years my father created the best shorthorn herd in Ireland entirely by using scientific methods.

at Dunedin, until at last the farmers protested at the government competing.

During the tour of inspection I tried to store my mind with facts that would interest my sister, who had been prevented from coming with us. It is always a privilege to meet an enthusiast who permits you to enter into the citadel of his ideals. Truby King told me an enthralling story. Like most great men he was so absorbed in his work that he had no time to think of self. As he made his early experiments with the animals and marked the extraordinary improvement in their condition he asked himself a very simple question: "If natural methods and commonsense have achieved such wonderful results in improving the health of my calves, is there any reason why natural methods should not be equally successful if applied to young human beings?" He especially investigated the problem of rearing dairy calves as "they shared with human infants the misfortune of being reared artificially at an early age."

Truby King pondered deeply. He studied the infant mortality rates of New Zealand—and he discovered that of the 25,000 babies born each year over 2,000 died annually. He decided to take up the cause of the mother and baby. In Lady Plunket, the wife of the Governor-General, he found an ardent supporter, and in 1907 the Plunket Society for the Promotion of the Health of Women and Children was established and the first Plunket nurse appointed. Within five years Truby King's enlightened methods were saving the lives of a thousand babies a year. He took his motto from Milton:

"Accuse not Nature, she hath done her part; do thou but thine."

Truby King had a flair for propaganda. He carried on an active campaign throughout New Zealand. He directed his words to the mothers and they responded. He talked to all who came across his path about the wastage of human life. At an early stage in his campaign he thus addressed a congress of farmers:

Civilisation is tending everywhere to undermine humanity, and we have no reason to be proud of the fact that, apart from dairy calves (which we treat rather worse than our own offspring), *there is no young creature in the world so ignorantly and cruelly nurtured as the average infant. There is no death rate in nature arising from maternal neglect and improper feeding that can be compared with human infant mortality.* . . . Yet careless bottle feeding is still resorted to by the majority of women.

The following is an extract from an article by the late Mrs. F. H. Carr :

With the help of his wife, he took in hand the babies first in the village, and then in Dunedin, having as an assistant a bright-faced, tactful and intelligent Scotch girl with no special training, but any amount of zeal and enthusiasm. She later became the first Plunket Nurse. They worked away quietly for two years, gaining results that proved without a doubt that if the infant mortality rate was to be materially reduced, the mothers (actual and prospective) must be roused from their enforced ignorance, and some system of education in mothercraft must be immediately introduced.

As a rule I dislike quoting figures. But when the following statistics were shown to my sister on her visit to the Karitane-Harris Hospital at Dunedin, she at once said that Truby King must be brought to England to do in the "Old Country" what he had done in New Zealand. She had already taken up infant welfare work at home and knew of the conditions prevalent in Great Britain.

Number of Deaths per 100 *Births* in (a) New Zealand as a whole and, (b) the four principal cities—Years 1907-1912.\*

	1907	1908	1909	1910	1911	1912
(a) New Zealand .. .. .	8.9	6.8	6.2	6.8	5.6	5.1
(b) Principal Cities :						
Auckland & Suburban Boroughs	9.7	8.2	6.2	7.9	6.3	5.7
Wellington & Suburban Boroughs	11.8	8.2	8.4	8.5	7.3	6.1
Christchurch & Suburban Boroughs	12.6	6.8	6.3	6.9	6.3	6.0
Dunedin & Suburban Boroughs	9.5	7.5	4.9	7.9	4.3	3.8

\* New Zealand to-day has the lowest Infantile Death-rate in the world—31 per 1,000—approximately half that of Great Britain and the United States. Sir Truby King dreams of a maximum infantile death rate throughout the British Empire of 25 per 1,000. He hopes that in New Zealand it will have fallen in 15 years to 10 per 1,000.



It was impossible not to be moved by Truby King's eloquence. We were face to face with a Peter the Hermit on a crusade that would revolutionise the methods of infant-rearing throughout the world.

During the early years of the war my sister and I used frequently to discuss Truby King. On her return from our Empire tour she once again took up infant welfare. She and Lady Plunket discussed the desirability of persuading Truby King to come over to England to start an infant welfare crusade in London. My help was invoked. "My brother felt that he could interpret the wishes of the members in no better way than by identifying the Overseas Club with the new movement for saving the child life of the British race."\*

#### WE INVITE TRUBY KING TO ENGLAND

Apparently it required the terrible wastage of human life in the war to arouse public opinion as to the importance of the saving of infant lives. My sister and Lady Plunket sent a cable to Truby King asking him if he would come to England. I cabled to Mr. W. F. Massey, the New Zealand Premier, asking him if the New Zealand Government would lend Dr. King's services to the Overseas Club for the proposed campaign. In a few days affirmative answers to both requests came. Six months later Mr. Massey himself performed the opening ceremony of the "Babies of Empire Training Centre" at 29, Trebovir Road.

Our campaign was described as "a crusade for the health of women and children for the honour of the Empire, under the auspices of the Overseas Club," with the slogan: "The healthy baby is the foundation of national greatness."

\* My sister in the "Babies of the Empire" section of the *Overseas Magazine*, March, 1918, page 67.

My sister thus describes the opening of the Babies of the Empire Training Centre by Mr. Massey, on 9 July, 1918:\*

The sun poured into the rooms, gay with flowers and shining with the cleanliness one usually associates with a country home. Trim-looking students in blue overalls and white caps flitted amongst the babies, who looked so well and happy that the visitors found it hard to believe that they were ailing or needed any special care.

A crowded audience listened, with deep attention, to the speeches, and once again we were made to realise how fortunate we are to have Dr. Truby King on this side of the world. . . . We felt proud to think that the Overseas Club had been instrumental in bringing him home to the Old Country.

The new society made rapid headway. On the medical side we turned to Lord† and Lady Dawson of Penn, and to their wise guidance and help the new movement owed much. A strong Committee was formed, and my old friend, Mr. E. R. Peacock,‡ a member of the Central Council of the Overseas Club, became Hon. Treasurer. Sir Alexander Roger became Chairman, and early in 1920 he wrote :§

A year ago your editor kindly afforded me an opportunity of saying something about the work of the Babies of the Empire Society, which had been founded by the Overseas Club. The Society has now been in existence for close upon two years, and in spite of the most adverse factors the Training Centre and Babies Hospital have achieved wonders. Its success has been in every way beyond all expectation and the death rate has been less than 1 per cent., comparing with 15 per cent. to 40 per cent. and even higher in babies' hospitals dealing with similar cases. . . .

It is impossible for the Committee to over-estimate the magnificent work of Dr. Truby King. In the short time at his disposal he was able to give a fresh impetus to the work of infant welfare in Great Britain ; he aroused new enthusiasm among the enthusiasts, and brought to bear, with tremendous effect on our much too

\* *Overseas*, August, 1918, page 53.

† Then Sir Bertrand Dawson.

‡ Now Sir Edward R. Peacock, G.C.V.O. § *Overseas*, February, 1920, page 67.

conservative ways, the revivifying and untrammelled methods for which he made New Zealand for ever famous. . . .

. . . Meanwhile it is with satisfaction that the Committee reports that the medical direction will be assumed by St. Thomas's Hospital. . . .

. . . We have not been by any means free from financial difficulties, and in this connection the Society is doubly grateful to the members of the Overseas Club who have shown continuous interest in the work, especially to members in the remoter parts of the Empire who have sent large monetary contributions.

On another occasion Sir Alexander Roger said :

It is a singular coincidence, one might well interpret it as an omen, that the Overseas Club which has launched the Babies



of the Empire Society, has as its emblem the Japanese symbol which denotes the creation of life, the origin of all things.

To-day the "Babies of the Empire Society" has grown into the Mothercraft Training Centre, Cromwell House, Highgate, which was purchased in 1925; and a great decrease in infant mortality in Great Britain in the last decade is in no small degree owing to the educative work carried out there under the supervision of Miss Mabel Liddiard, who was the first British student to receive training at Trebovir Road.

There are frequent references in my letters to the starting of the "Babies of the Empire" crusade :

28 October, 1917.

W. dined and we discussed the Truby King scheme and W. is going to get the Plunkets to meet me one evening so that we can talk it over fully.

87, Victoria Street, S.W.1.

Sunday, 4 November, 1917.

All sorts of rumours were flying about London yesterday, that the Germans were going to try an invasion, that the Sinn Feiners were out again, etc. ! . . .

One evening I went to dine with my little Russian friend at Hampstead, to meet his young lady. I had not seen him since the beginning of the year and he was very interesting about Russia. He says it is absolutely impossible for us to realise the state Russia is in—complete chaos. He does not see how she can be of any more use to the Allies for ages !

6 November.

Lord Plunket lunched with me at the Marlborough Club and we discussed the Truby King scheme. It went off very well and I liked him. He is not an enthusiast like Lord Grey but very reliable. I took up the attitude that the Overseas Club would help whether it got the credit or not because I am genuinely interested in the idea and am anxious to back up W. She might be the head of the whole infant welfare movement in Great Britain if she plays her cards properly.

Thursday, 8 November.

Northcliffe has done very well in America. I am told he aspires to be Prime Minister. He thinks he is the only person who can run the country. There was an article about him and the Air Ministry in the paper. There seems to be quite a likelihood of his being appointed.

12 November.

One of those terrific days at the Air Board. I never had a second, telephones and bells going all day and pilots rushing in and out for instructions.

23 November.

I am dining with the Plunkets to settle further details about the Overseas Babies of the Empire, and on Monday night with Lady Dawson, again in connection with the Baby scheme. 'The Plunkets' was a family dinner, just Lord and Lady P. and W. who has been staying with them for four days. The new committee is definitely going to be called "The Babies of the Empire" and is to work under the auspices of the Overseas Club.

All that remains to be done now is to think out schemes of getting money and I am going to give W. and Lady Plunket letters of introduction to several of my friends as a start among others, Selfridge, E. R. Peacock and Martin. Each should be good for a hundred pounds.

26 November.

I dined with Sir Bertrand and Lady Dawson. Those present were Winifride, Lord and Lady Plunket, Miss Wheatley, Francis R. Jones\* and three leading doctors. I sat between Lady Dawson and a doctor. Sir Bertrand Dawson after dinner acted as a kind of chairman and we all sat in a semi-circle in the drawing-room. They discussed T.K.'s visit and plans and how best to set about it, and really it went off very well. They are very strong that no press announcements or public meetings should be held till after he has been here for a couple of months and got the medical profession behind him, and altogether they gave very practical advice.

I was really very much interested and it did make me happy to think that the Overseas Club will be able to help about infant mortality in England. (*Letters.*)

\* Acting-secretary of the Overseas Club.



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## Chapter XIX

PRIVATE SECRETARY TO THE AIR MINISTER

DECEMBER, 1917 — JANUARY, 1918

AT THE HEART OF THINGS—ROTHERMERE AND NORTHCLIFFE

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## Chapter XIX

### PRIVATE SECRETARY TO THE AIR MINISTER

#### AT THE HEART OF THINGS

THERE is a sombre note in the letters I wrote at the beginning of December, 1917. Although we were pinning our hopes on the million American "dough-boys" to be ready by next summer, the immediate future was not very hopeful. October and November had been black months. We had been led to suppose that the war of attrition was wearing down the Germans. If German man-power was in the desperate straits that our optimists asserted, how was it possible for Germany to spare seven divisions for the Italian front? These troops, trained in mountain warfare, played a vital part in bringing about the *débâcle* of Caporetto (24 October), which very nearly knocked Italy out of the war. Italy was known to be war-weary, and the German-directed blow on the Isonzo was one of the master-strokes of the war. The Central Powers failed, however, to drive home their staggering blow, and in spite of the holocaust Italy, by a superb effort on the Piave, stood firm and the supreme peril was averted.\*

In November the Bolshevist *coup d'état* in Russia took place and our worst fears were realised. Russia was out of the war for all practical purposes. And the immediate consequence to Great Britain—then bearing the chief weight of responsibility for the defence of the Western front—was the liberation, so it was expected, of many German divisions for the spring campaign in 1918. A

\* For an excellent brief account of Caporetto see *A History of the Great War*, Cruttwell, Chapter XXVII. "History can scarcely record a more wonderful transfiguration. The character of the rout is made abundantly clear by the official list of the casualties. While 10,000 were killed and 30,000 wounded, the number of prisoners was 293,000 and of deserters 400,000. Yet this stricken army, apparently on the verge of dissolution, maintained for a month a steadfast and resolute front against great odds."



journalist friend, who had been an optimist in January, wrote in December :

We have to admit that 1917 did not realise all that we hoped. The people of Great Britain dreamed at the beginning of the year that the German armies on the Western front would be smashed and that our troops would force their way right through them. This dream was not realised, and the German fighting strength is apparently as I write unaffected. The disintegration of the Russian army has released an enormous number of German and Austrian troops from the Eastern front. . . . It is expected that the Germans will make a serious attempt to break through on the Western front.

The prospect of my doing some really constructive work at the Air Board seemed remote. I had now settled down as a captain on Jenkins's staff, and while my work was useful it gave little scope for initiative. On Rothermere's appointment I wondered if perhaps he might ask me to help in his task of creating the new Air Force. To him was entrusted as first Air Minister the difficult job of blending the Royal Naval Air Service and the Royal Flying Corps in a single new Service.

A week passed and I had no further direct contact with Rothermere. I tried to do my routine job for Jenkins with enthusiasm, but it was beginning to pall. Only at lunch-time and in the evenings, when I was amidst my Overseas affairs, could I expend my pent-up energy.

I hear that Lord R. is interviewing all the heads of Branches. I am sure he will do very well, tho' whether I shall see anything of him I rather doubt. There are rumours that we are all going to be moved to Kensington in a couple of months' time. I only hope they are not true as it would be an awful nuisance to me as the great advantage of being here is that I can go round to the Overseas Club at lunch time.

I expect W. will have told you the news about the Babies scheme and our dinner at the Dawsons, which really went off very well. They are all getting quite keen about it and Lady Plunket is so nice to work with. I hope Dr. Truby King won't be torpedoed on the way, after all the expectations which have been roused !

The Russian news is awful. (*Letter.*)

3 December.

Yesterday when on Sunday duty I went into Miss K's room next door, she was also up doing Sunday work and I found her doing her typing and smoking a cigarette; just think, a lady secretary in a government office smoking! What are we coming to? (*Letter*).

Just while I was going through one of the periodic waves of depression, from which I have suffered all my life when I have considered that my latent energies were not being utilised, Fate was in reality taking an interest in my problems. Henceforth till the end of the war my services were made full use of.

4 December.

As my wire will have told you, I have been appointed Rothermere's Private Secretary.

I lunched at the Marlborough Club and afterwards went round to the Burlington Arcade to my bootmaker to order a second pair of long boots, and was a little late back at the Air Board. I was actually talking on one telephone when the other one rang. It was a woman's voice to say would I go down to see Lord Rothermere. He could not have been nicer. He said: "Would you like to be my private secretary?" to which I replied, "I should love to be," so he said "Right." While I was waiting to go in to see him I had felt a little bit nervous!

Lord R. went on to say that he wanted to get two or three able men around him who have worked at the Air Board and know the inner working. He wants me to start right away and will arrange everything with General Jenkins. I am to be his principal secretary. You can imagine what I felt. It was the first really happy thing that has taken place for a long time. It means that I have now got a really important job which will put me right in the centre of things.

When R. was appointed I was so happy as I had an extraordinary conviction that in some way I would work with him. Then as there was a delay of some days and nothing happened the reaction set in, and as he did not send for me I thought perhaps that after all he would not care to employ me and that he might feel I was rather an Empire "crank." For several days I was rather depressed.

Later.

At 6.30 the General rang for me and told me that he had had a

long talk with Rothermere and that as a special exception he would let me hand over to my successor to-morrow so that I could start with Rothermere the day after. (*Letter.*)

Wednesday, 5 December.

During the day I went round to the various departments that I deal with and told them that I was starting to-morrow in Room 125 as Lord R.'s secretary. They were all very nice and I was congratulated all day. Everyone seemed to think it is a great chance. I sit in a nice little room with a carpet next door to Rothermere, and the window looks towards Charing Cross and the Embankment.

General Jenkins told Rothermere that the Foreign Office and various other departments had tried to get hold of me but that so far he had always managed to keep me, but that now he realised he was up against a brick wall!

I was woken this morning by rather loud firing, it went on for about half-an-hour then gradually died away. The "All Clear" signal has not yet gone. (*Letter.*)

I actually took over my new duties on 6 December, the day on which the Armistice on the Russian Front was proclaimed. I had no time, however, for indulging in depression about the Russian collapse. I was suddenly thrown into one of the most interesting jobs in London. British ascendancy in the air was growing and the importance of the new combined Air Force was growing too, and if the war lasted another two years there was no knowing the part we might not play in the final act of the war drama. The air raids which Germany had been carrying out with her Gothas over Great Britain during the past year would be insignificant compared with the raids we hoped to organise over Berlin and other German cities before another year had passed.

My Empire work was booming. My plans for the launching of the English-Speaking Union were steadily taking concrete shape and now at last the country was going to make use of me in office hours. From being a subordinate, one of many hundreds of captains on the organising side of the Royal Flying Corps, I suddenly found myself in a key position—as principal "Private Secretary to the President of the Air Board." Generals

who had hardly noticed me when I stood to attention as they passed their humble junior in the passages of the Hotel Cecil suddenly cultivated my acquaintance. Wherever I went I was greeted with friendly smiles. Rothermere appointed as my colleagues Major Segrave\* and Colonel Philippi.

As the first Air Minister Rothermere had one of the most interesting jobs of the war. During the next five months I worked very hard. I kept R.'s private papers. The scarlet leather-covered boxes with Cabinet secret despatches emblazoned with "G.R." came to me. I collated the reports and only gave to my chief the really important papers. Documents labelled "very secret" had to be kept in a special file of which I alone had the key. I dreamt one night that a spy was trying to worm information from me—an Irish Republican emissary of Germany who had got into my room when I was working alone at night—and just at the critical moment as the documents were being wrested from me I woke up in a cold sweat!

I retain very happy memories of my work as R.'s secretary. During the five months he never said an unkind word to me, although he went through a great personal sorrow at the time. I never had the frightened feeling that I used sometimes to have when I was on Northcliffe's staff. During my many years with Rothermere's elder brother I could count on the fingers of my two hands the occasions on which he jumped on me. Nevertheless, there was always an atmosphere of uncertainty. I knew I was one of Northcliffe's favourites, but the life of the favourite is sometimes precarious and I had seen favourites pass out of favour. With Rothermere I was dealing with a normal human being, a just employer who treated me as an equal. In him there was not that elusive something which made his brother an individual who could not be regarded as an ordinary mortal.

For the second time Rothermere became my chief and

\* Sir Henry Segrave, the racing motorist.

I worked in intimate association with him. For several years when I was Sales Manager of the Amalgamated Press I used to see him almost daily. When I had difficulties with Northcliffe in extricating myself from Carmelite House in order to devote myself to my Empire work in 1912, Rothermere helped me. I have never forgotten his kindness on that occasion. He warned me not to be quixotic, he pointed out to me that when the first flush of enthusiasm had passed ideals were not very substantial things to live on ; that before working for causes it would be well to assure for oneself a moderate income. He asked me to think twice—no three times—before giving up one of the best positions in Fleet Street. But when he saw that my mind was made up he made my withdrawal easy and treated me generously.

The following extracts are taken from letters written at the time and show how Rothermere appeared to his secretary :

Thursday, 6 December.

I have had a long and strenuous day. First of all there was the air raid as you know. We got two of the raiders down. On arriving at the Air Board I walked round first of all to say a final good-bye to my old friends and then went downstairs and started in Room 125 straight away. I am in and out of R.'s room all day and he could not be nicer to work for and always calls me Evelyn as he used to do.

The work is extraordinarily interesting and I am right at the heart of things and know everything that is going on, and I really think I shall be able to make good. I am going to do my level best. At first it is a little bewildering but it is just the position I would have chosen for myself. Northcliffe's private secretary rang up during the day and asked for Rothermere's Private Secretary. It was rather a surprise to him when he found it was I. I think I am one of the very few individuals who have been private sec. to both brothers !

Friday, 7 December.

I had a terrific amount of work to get through to-day, but it was absorbingly interesting, I have never had more interesting work and I am right in the know and General and Admirals have been rushing in and out of my office all day. I took over from

Cowdray's secretary to-day and am now the only person sitting in this ante-room. The man who occupied this room before kept it rather untidily and there were stacks of papers scattered about, so I am trying to get everything ship-shape to-day.

I could not be working for a nicer man and he treats me so nicely and consults me about everything and does not a bit make me feel that I am just a secretary. He practically leaves all his letter-writing to me. I don't think there is any job of the kind I would change with just now and I really feel I can be of tremendous use. I went round to the Cock Inn for a hurried lunch and then went over to the Overseas Club for half-an-hour.

All the secret documents, that come in those red cases, I have to make a synopsis of, so as to be able to tell him about them. My window looks over the Adelphi Terrace. My tea is brought up on a tray from the staff refreshment room downstairs, tea and those little dull round biscuits.

Saturday, 8 December.

Another very busy and extraordinarily interesting day. It is so funny suddenly being let inside all the secrets and knowing just what is going on after being just a cog in the wheel. I intend to cultivate the art of never knowing anything, already I find people trying to pump me.

At present Rothermere is just learning all he can from everyone and I think I have been able to help him quite a lot already. So far I have walked to the office every morning.

Saturday, 8 December.

R. takes me absolutely into his confidence and discusses everything with me and says, "Do you think we can do this," etc. The hours are of course pretty long, if anything longer than before, yesterday I was there from 9.30 till 8.0, but I do not mind as I feel the work is *really* worth while.

Yesterday I was in his room during two very interesting conferences.

I think the Air Service will become more and more important so we are bound to have exciting times. I am afraid we are in for an anxious spell for the next six months till the U. States get busy.

Sunday, 9 December.

I had a good night, which was rather surprising as I felt quite worn out last night. Before going to bed I read a chapter of Dr. Horton's life. I did two hours of Overseas work before I got up this morning.

I had a very good lunch at the Ritz with R. and Lima, the man

who runs the *Sunday Pictorial* and *Daily Mirror*. R. could not be more friendly, and then after lunch we went up to his sitting-room and discussed all his future schemes. I had brought a lot of important official papers with me which we went through all Sunday afternoon.

10 December.

I walked down to the Air Board but left my flat in extra good time as I knew R. would be early. I was down there by 9.25 and he turned up about ten minutes later, so I was glad I was in such good time. I had another extraordinarily interesting day. What is so nice about him is that he treats me always as a friend and there is not one-twentieth the ceremony that there was with my late boss (Jenkins), none of the clicking of heels, etc. He discusses everything with me and really makes me feel that I am being of use to him.

Tuesday, 11 December.

I am not going to Church to-day as I wanted to have time to read my papers about the capture of Jerusalem. You know what it all means to me and how happy it has made me. I think it is a wonderful thing to have happened to the British Empire, no matter what happens afterwards.

Of course R. is extra busy now as the future amalgamation of the two Air Services is being built up. The present is really quite an abnormal time as a crisis in the war has arrived and the whole new amalgamation of the Air Forces is going on and R. is working extra long hours. (*Letters.*)

The capture of Jerusalem was one of the great events of the war. After three years of disillusionment, of repeated disappointments on the Western Front, where Germany seemed impregnable, the cold print of the official despatches recorded a feat of arms which had all the glamour of old-time warfare—an achievement which captured the imagination of mankind. Jerusalem, the city of the Eternal, after seven hundred years was once more in Christian hands. As a boy the story of the Crusades had fascinated me. I had never thought that I should live to see another Crusade, this time a crusade of soldiers from all parts of the British Empire under a British leader. All my belief in the civilising mission of the English-speaking people, the People of Destiny, re-asserted itself. We had drawn inspiration from the

precepts propounded by Christ among the hills of Judea : that debt could never be repaid. We might at least as guardians of the Holy Land give enlightened rule and the blessings of the *Pax Britannica* to the cradle of our Faith. Allenby's troops had marched during these dramatic days over the stones and hillsides where had walked the Saviour of the world. To be entrusted with the keeping of this small piece of the earth's surface on behalf of mankind was a stupendous charge. By reason of its age-long experience in colonial administration and in holding the scales between the peoples of all faiths the British Empire was well fitted for the task.

Wednesday, 12 December.

R. breakfasted with the Prime Minister so was late. It was another very interesting day and among other things I had to ring up G.H.Q. in France on the telephone ; it was extraordinarily clear. I had a quick lunch at Fullers' in the Strand and then went into the O.S. Club for half-an-hour. The money has been pouring into our Hamper Fund and our suppliers have made a special rush to get all the hampers out to-night, the last day on which they can leave so that they will be delivered to the troops by Christmas.

I have got an article on Jerusalem for the January issue of *Overseas* from Dr. Horton. Although I am very tired every evening it is quite a different kind of tiredness from that caused by just shouting on the telephone all day long with pilots rushing in and out of my room, as in my late job.

I loved what you said about personal ambition, because I do so want to keep it in the background. And I really think that I am, and having no personal ambition gives one such a free feeling and not trying to get any special job and not wanting anything except to be able to do my own *Overseas* work afterwards or whatever other work comes my way.

Friday, 14 December.

Government officials and important people are always ringing up and I have to fit in their interviews. Very often when R. is in the middle of interviewing someone he will want some special paper or letter and I have to produce it at a moment's notice.

Most of the people who come to see him pass through my room and I talk to them so that I know what is going on and then there are others whom I dispose of without their seeing him.

(*Letters.*)



Sir Frederick Smith,\* the Attorney-General, as Treasurer of the Bench of the Honourable Society of Gray's Inn, gave a dinner in honour of the Prime Minister and proposed the toast of the recently unified Air Service. To this toast Rothermere responded in a speech which was loudly applauded. The historic hall of Gray's Inn made a wonderful setting for the occasion. *Inter alia* Rothermere said :

At the Air Board we are wholeheartedly in favour of air reprisals. (Loud cheers.) It is our duty to avenge the murder of innocent women and children. As the enemy elects, so it will be the case of "eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth," and in this respect we shall slave for complete and satisfying retaliation. (Loud cheers.) General Ludendorff proclaims the war a war of nations, suggesting that the civilian population is as much a mark for the airman's bombs as the fighting man. We detest these doctrines, holding them to be grossly immoral. But in fighting for our lives and the lives of our women and children we cannot, and we will not, consent to their one-sided application. (Cheers.) We have too much at stake in this contest to concede any advantage to a treacherous enemy. He has to learn in this as in larger things that it does not pay. We are determined, in other words, that whatever outrages are committed on the civilian population of this country will be met by similar treatment upon his own people. † (Loud cheers.)

Saturday, 15 December.

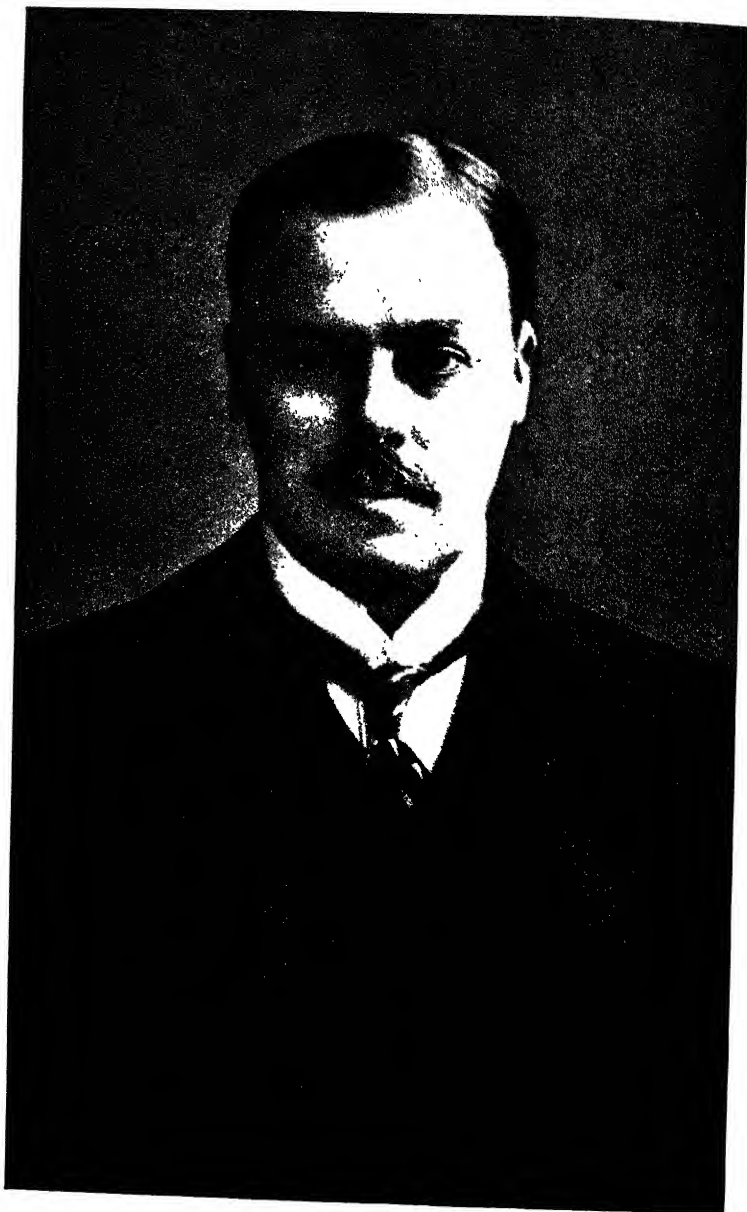
I went to the dinner at Gray's Inn, in the hall where Queen Elizabeth came and where one of Shakespeare's plays was performed. It really was very interesting. Lloyd George spoke for over an hour and spoke extremely well, and you could have heard a pin drop, then the heads of the Air Force, Rothermere first and then Sir David Henderson and others. I sat at a little round table just at the back of where the P.M. was. There were six at my table, including Harold Smith ("F.E.'s" brother), Davies, (the P.M.'s secretary) and Warden Chilcott, who is a bosom friend of Winston's. Rothermere read his speech, of course he lacks practice and is inclined to go too fast, but with experience he will improve—it was the speech in which he talked about air reprisals—"an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." I could not help wishing they all talked more ideals—I hate reprisals.

I am sorry to say R.'s son is wounded and in hospital. (*Letter.*)

\* Subsequently Lord Birkenhead.

† *Times*' Report.





Lord Rothermere, First Air Minister. December 1917–April, 1918.

## ROTHERMERE AND NORTHCLIFFE

Apart from Sir George Sutton, I do not think that there are many who have worked in such intimate personal relationship with the two brothers Northcliffe and Rothermere as I have. It was always an interesting experience to compare their characters and reactions to current events. In *Uphill* I have sought to give a fair picture of Northcliffe as he appeared to me during my fourteen years' close association with him. To give an accurate picture of Rothermere is not easy. His outlines are not so clear cut. The first time I ever met him was in Room 2 at Carmelite House in 1903, during my postcard career. Whereas Northcliffe had a palatial room with a huge velvet sofa, heavy curtains, Empire furniture, super-pile carpet and rich ornaments—Rothermere's room was simplicity itself. There was an utter lack of ceremony and no display. His room was only a third the size of his brother's. There was a desk, and a couple of arm-chairs. There were very few papers lying about.

A young-looking, rather thick-set man in the middle thirties with a friendly handshake and a hearty laugh reclined in an arm chair studying a financial paper. I soon felt at ease. Could this be one of the two alarming Harmsworth brothers whose names could cause hearts to quake in Fleet Street? Could this friendly man be the financial wizard who had largely helped to create the Harmsworth fortunes and on whose judgment Northcliffe relied? I do not think Rothermere as a very young man ever mapped out in advance the position he wished one day to occupy. His primary preoccupation as a badly-paid civil servant was to escape from the restricted life of an official career and to succeed commercially. If I had to criticise Rothermere, I would say that he overestimates the power of the money-bags in life and does not make sufficient allowance for the ideal side of men's natures.

"Mr. Harold," as he then was, gave the impression of

being just an ordinary clear-sighted mortal, devoted to his family of three boys and his life on the Norfolk Broads. He was the antithesis of his brother in many things. He hated the limelight. He had no political ambitions. He had no desire for public office. I once asked him, "What do you consider the biggest thing you have ever done?" and he replied, "I do not think I have ever done anything very big, but then I am really rather contemptuous of worldly success." Now with most men if they had made this statement I should have regarded it as an affectation. Not so with Rothermere. I believe he was quite sincere in what he said. He is essentially a modest man despite his detractors.

Rothermere had an amazing flair for figures and for getting to the core of intricate commercial problems. On one occasion an astute American business magnate came over to England to effect a large deal. He waited in Northcliffe's outer room. Busy assistants, an elegant lady typist and an office boy in Eton jacket darted in and out of the great man's room. The American visitor was shown in to see Northcliffe, sitting in state, in a room which even Mr. Rockefeller could not have outdone. He was impressed. At the end of the interview the onyx electric push-button was pressed thrice. The Eton-jacketed office boy appeared:

"Take Mr. Blank to see Mr. Harold."

The visitor was led across the passage. In the tiny anteroom to Room 2 was one young male clerk in the twenties. Without ceremony he passed into Mr. Harold's small office overlooking the *Graphic* building in Carmelite Street. He found a young-looking man sitting back in an armchair reading Dickens. He was perplexed. At first he thought there must be a mistake. But when, before very long, he began to discuss his proposal, which involved a large sum of money, he found that the young-looking man in the armchair had every detail of the scheme at his finger tips!

Rothermere never indulged in personal spite. If you

were in his entourage you might not have so spectacular a career as with his elder brother, but your feet were on firmer ground. I want to be entirely fair to Northcliffe. He was to me a generous and kind chief. I retained his friendship till his death. But there was a hard side to his nature, which increased as the years passed. I think that this irritability in Northcliffe's latter years was due to the illness from which he died.

To be with Rothermere was reposeful after being with his brother. Rothermere was not a journalistic genius like Northcliffe. He had not that uncanny news sense which put Northcliffe in a class apart among the newspaper men of his day. He had not the originality of mind of his brother. He could never have created the vast Harmsworth undertaking by himself. But as a team the two Harmsworth brothers made a unique combination. Rothermere could not interpret the public mind as his brother, and yet he had very necessary qualities—qualities which his brother lacked. Without his sane business judgment and knowledge of finance the Associated Newspapers and the Amalgamated Press would never have become such gigantic concerns. The successful establishment of the vast paper-making undertaking in Newfoundland was largely due to Rothermere. The younger brother had the supreme gift of organising. He refused to be enmeshed in detail. He looked straight through a mass of figures to the essential facts in any scheme. When he took over *The Daily Mirror* from his brother he instantly made it a great financial success. During the war he established the *Sunday Pictorial* which subsequently became one of the wonders of Fleet Street.

When he got to the Air Ministry he found two services, the Royal Naval Air Service and the Royal Flying Corps, jealous of each other and with no uniformity of engines and methods. He at once set about co-ordinating the two services and standardising the types of engines used.

No one connected with the Air Force had a greater admiration for the pilots than Rothermere. I frequently

heard him say that "all our previous standards of bravery will have to be revised in face of the deeds of our boys of nineteen and twenty." During his term of office he wrote :

I wonder if those who read the daily bulletins issued by the Air Force as regards the fighting on the various fronts have any idea of what is entailed by the simple statement "twelve enemy aircraft were brought down"? Spinning nose-dives, tail-slides, side-slips, "falling-leaf," looping the loop, and the many other stunts entailed, almost take our breath away. . . . Only human beings of perfect physique, of matchless bravery or of extraordinary quickness of brain can have any chance of distinguishing themselves in aerial warfare in 1918. And here is the miracle—the British Empire possesses thousands, not hundreds, of these supermen.\*

I continue the extracts from my letters :—

17 December, 1917.

The lunch at the Marlborough to the American Aviation delegation went off very well and was very interesting. Winston Churchill and the Duke of Westminster were there and also lots of Flying Corps big-wigs. This afternoon I have been perpetually in and out of R.'s room. He said "As soon as I get things all fixed up here I will make you a Major." It was very nice of him and shows that he is pleased.†

Thursday, 20.

The raid on Tuesday night was a fairly bad one although it did not make nearly as much noise as on other occasions. They got two bombs quite close to Cleopatra's Needle and one in Eaton Square and several in Chelsea.

I had a very busy day at the office and people were coming in and out and interesting things were happening. R. took me to lunch with him at the Savoy Hotel with a naval man who is in charge of squadrons which are always bombing Belgium. I dined at the Beefsteak Club.

Friday, 21.

R. said to-day he wanted me to be secretary of the Committee he is going to appoint on reorganisation of the Flying Corps, with General Salmond and two or three others on it.

Saturday, 22.

To-morrow I have got to lunch with R. at the Ritz Hotel and go out to Hendon to see one of the aircraft acceptance parks.

\* Magazine article.

† I was gazetted a Major in April, 1918.

I could not possibly be working for a nicer Chief. Just at the moment he is rather worried about his son, as he may have to go thro' another operation.

Saturday, 5 January, 1918.

Our chief excitement has been the appointing of the new Air Council and everyone thinks General Trenchard's promotion as Chief of the Air Staff is a good move. He has been head of the R.F.C. in the Field since the early days of the war. One day last week I had to go to see Northcliffe at the British War Mission, which is now at Crewe House in Curzon Street.

Saturday, 12 January.

I shall lay in a supply of soap, as I hear it is going to get very short. . . .\*

On Thursday evening I went to dine with R. at the Ritz. There were eight in all, R., Winston Churchill, Sir William Weir and Sir Arthur Duckham (of Ministry of Munitions), St. John Harmsworth (the invalid), a General Huggins, and Joynson-Hicks.

The party was small enough for everyone to join in and it really was most interesting and one heard a lot of inner history about the early days of the war. I think Winston is just the right person at the Ministry of Munitions.

The day the debate on Women's Suffrage was on I had to go down to the House of Lords. It was wonderful their carrying the vote by such a large majority. I had never been in the House of Lords before.

\* Not very patriotic, I fear !



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# Chapter XX

## LORD ROTHERMERE RESIGNS

JANUARY—APRIL, 1918

DEATH INTERVENES—THE GREAT GERMAN OFFENSIVE—  
END OF A CHAPTER

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## Chapter XX

### LORD ROTHERMERE RESIGNS

#### DEATH INTERVENES

FOR two months all went well at the Air Ministry. Rothermere worked unceasingly to push through the great task of co-ordinating the two services into one harmonious whole—an achievement for which I think he has never received his due. As I watched him during those first weeks I was sure that he would be remembered as the creator of the Royal Air Force and that he would continue to occupy that great position till peace came. I saw myself as a vital link in the organisation and when ultimate victory came I was convinced that all associated with the Rothermere regime would come in for their share of praise. The sequel turned out very different from my anticipations. I had not reckoned with the hand of death nor with a broken heart.

A reference to the illness of Rothermere's eldest son Vyvyan is contained in this letter, written on 20 January: "Lord R. has been rather worried about his boy, who has been wounded and who has had three operations since his last wound. They seem to be afraid of blood poisoning." From now onwards Rothermere was a changed man. He worked just as assiduously, although he usually spent a couple of hours with his son at the nursing home during the afternoon, but there was a lack of concentration about him, which only those who have watched the lingering illness of a loved one will understand. He was face to face with one of the great moments of life, when nothing counts save keeping that one life from the clutches of death.

I never knew Vyvyan Harmsworth intimately although I had met him several times. I recall a splendid young man who was as devoted to his father as his father was

to him. I took a special interest in the son because when Rothermere decided to send him to Eton I went down to see Hubert Brinton, an old friend for whom I had a great admiration, and arranged with him that Vyvyan Harmsworth should go to his house. Many years later, after young Harmsworth had left Eton, Brinton told me that he was one of the finest young men that he had ever come across during his Eton career. It was a tragedy that this young man was not spared to fill the great position that awaited him. Beaverbrook once said to me about the relationship of father and son, "The death of Rothermere's son—his eldest son—had an enormous effect upon him. The boy had been at home shortly before he died. He was staying with his father at the Ritz Hotel. He was rather like a watch-dog in an outer room, guarding his master. The boy, I expect, was showing more devotion to Rothermere than he had ever known."

During the last weeks of his son's illness I never asked Rothermere for tidings. But frequently during the day I would have to receive for him telephone-bulletins from the Nursing Home. If he were in the middle of a conference with the Air Board chiefs I would hand him a slip with the message written down. The gnawing anxiety never left him. He had already lost one son and he knew how quickly death can intervene. Sometimes I would enter his room unnoticed. He was restlessly pacing up and down. He would suddenly stop by the big window overlooking the Embankment and stand with his back to the room deep in thought. There was nothing I could say or do except to try and distract his mind by placing some important problem of administration before him or urge him to grant an interview to some clamouring caller.

On 12 February the end came.

Sunday, 17 February.

Lord R. was absent from the office all week on account of his son's death, excepting for one hour when he came down on Wednesday afternoon. He is very much cut up and I only hope he will go away for a couple of weeks and get really well. If

only he could be induced to go to Italy now I am sure it would be the thing for him. Of course I went to the funeral on Friday. I had to show everyone into their seats. It was a very nice service at St. Mary's, Bryanston Square, and afterwards we motored up to Hampstead where the boy was buried with military honours. Yesterday I went round to the Ritz to see R. and talked to him about things in general for nearly an hour. The Dr. is anxious about his heart. (*Letter to parents.*)

Sunday morning, 24 February, 1918.

I had a telephone message from Northcliffe yesterday evening asking me to come down to Broadstairs for the day, so I am going. I am glad to say R. is decidedly better and has been working quite hard the last three days; at one time I really began to fear that he might try to chuck it all up. (*Letter to parents.*)

After his son's death Rothermere was no longer concentrating his whole being on his task. I don't think at the time he realised that he was different. His sub-conscious self was otherwise absorbed. He had no time for introspection. If only he could have become engrossed in his work I knew it would help him through the valley of desolation. But it is easy for onlookers, who have not drunk of the cup of despair, to make plans for those stunned by sorrow. To their eyes the stricken mortal looks the same, he goes about his daily task as usual, his routine work is punctiliously carried out but something is different. Rothermere tried to carry on as usual immediately after his son's death. He did not reckon with an impaired nervous system that time alone could restore.

Rothermere had always taken a great interest in the pilots in the Air Force. He recognised the necessity for a large ground-personnel but I think he regretted the fact. He hoped by degrees to fill all the important positions at the aerodromes and aircraft parks with flying officers who had done their share of fighting and who could no longer stand the terrible strain of the Western Front. He made a point of talking to flying officers home on leave. He wanted to find out at first hand what the average pilot was thinking of the organisation of the

Force and of the Air Board hierarchy; he took into his confidence two or three young Colonels. Now in the fighting services there is rigid etiquette and seniority counts for much. Rumours began to circulate that the President of the Air Board was listening to—nay even seeking—the views of junior officers. Such action on the part of the official head of the Air Force horrified some of the more punctilious generals and admirals connected with the Force; it was “subversive of discipline.” From the standpoint of the head of one of the largest and most successful commercial undertakings in Great Britain what could have been more natural?

In his quarter of a century in Fleet Street during which he directed the business side of the Northcliffe enterprises, Rothermere, like his brother, was always on the look out for subordinates of promise. At Carmelite House the junior of twenty-five, if possessed of exceptional gifts, who had hitherto been earning three or four hundred pounds a year, might suddenly find himself in a position of responsibility with a salary running into four figures. He had been promoted by Rothermere or Northcliffe over the heads of many employees years his senior. Undoubtedly one of the reasons for the success of the Harmsworth brothers was their ability to select the right young men for key positions. Carmelite House was an Eldorado for young men with brains and initiative. Was it surprising that Rothermere found the rigid military caste system in force at the Hotel Cecil uncongenial? He once said to me:

I found the Air Ministry was simply a nest of intrigue. To use an American expression there were all kinds of ex-infantry officers “gunning” for high service positions to which their qualifications by no stretch of imagination entitled them. The matchless valour of the individual pilot has even up to the present day screened from public knowledge the wrong-headed organisation of the Air Force and its palpable inadequacy to meet the requirements of the present day.

The inevitable happened. Rothermere aroused the

hostility of General Trenchard—"Boom" we called him because of his deep voice—and his friends. Part of my duties used to be to go up into the sanctum of General Trenchard or some other magnate and say, "Will you please come down to see Lord Rothermere?" "Three-pips" enjoyed the sensation of giving commands to the demi-gods! I was back again in my first year at Carmelite House fourteen years previously, summoning Kennedy Jones, Tom Marlowe, Hamilton Edwards or even on occasion "Mr. Harold" himself to Northcliffe's presence.

Evidently increasing resentment was felt in the opposition camp. Rothermere sent minutes to the Chief of the Air Staff. Even my Chief, who was free from red-tape and had never written a minute in his own business, had to bow before the goddess of army custom. All my life I have distrusted minute writing—necessary though it may be. On paper, controversy becomes more acute, the breach widens, each side seeks to score off its opponent. General Trenchard had skilled advisers; on his staff were distinguished parliamentarians like Sir John Simon and Lord Hugh Cecil. Rothermere appointed General Trenchard to an important command in France, Sir Frederick Sykes was made Chief of the Air Staff at the Hotel Cecil. The fat was in the fire. Questions were asked in Parliament.

Just when the controversy was becoming acute early in April I got a severe attack of mumps and a temperature of just on 105! I disappeared from the stage.

The following extracts are taken from letters to my parents written at this period:

Office,

26 January, 1918.

On Monday last week Lord R. gave a lunch in honour of the French Minister of Aviation, M. Dumesnil, at the Marlborough Club. It was quite interesting—21 in all. I sat between General Livingstone and Sir. W. Weir. After the lunch I went round with Lord R. to Lord N.'s office and it seemed quite like old times. They have been very full of the question of giving the officers in the new army a greater share of the higher jobs.

## STRUGGLE

On Wednesday I lunched with John Buchan\*, the Head of the Dept. of Information at the Foreign Office. He was very friendly and I always like him so much. He much appreciates what *Overseas* is doing and I hope to get him to help me with the question of paper supply which is getting very urgent.

I have been trying to rub up my shorthand in spare moments lately and I find it rapidly coming back to me. It is very useful as I have a lot of notes to make in a hurry. . . .

Marlborough Club, Pall Mall,  
Sunday, 3 February, 1918.

Most of the damage during the air raid on Monday night was done by the last lot of enemy aircraft which came over at 12.30 and 30 people were killed and 91 wounded in the air-raid shelter in the *John Bull* office in Long Acre. They and many others were in the basement there and the bomb burst down there and its explosion brought down all the floors above and you can imagine what happened. I went round to see it and it certainly must have been very dreadful. The next building to the Hotel Cecil was also hit, so I certainly think they are aiming at the Air Board.

The chief excitement at the Air Board has been the appointment of Sir Henry Norman on the Air Council. I think it is a very good appointment as he is a much-travelled man who is very receptive of new ideas and should have a good influence on some of the "cut and dry" military minds.

Office,  
Saturday, 10 February, 1918.

. . . Lord R. told me that he might be going to Italy in a month's time and that he would take me with him. He expects to go to the Italian Front. It will be very interesting if he goes, but it may come to nothing—of course I should like to have seen it for myself. I don't suppose he will be gone for more than 10 days.

87, Victoria Street, S.W.  
1 March, 1918.

. . . My visit to Northcliffe at Broadstairs was very pleasant. He could not have been nicer and it was like old days. The only others at Elmwood were his mother, who is wonderfully active for over 70, and his private secretary. After lunch I went for a walk in the garden with him and he showed me their dug-out, where they all go during raids. They are always being bombed and are quite accustomed to being under fire. He wanted to

\* Created Lord Tweedsmuir in 1935.

talk over one or two matters connected with our air defences so that I could stir things up, and he got a naval officer to come up to see me. After a talk with the latter I went for a drive with Northcliffe and his mother and then had another talk with him on all sorts of subjects. He is very keen on his propaganda job\* and I am sure he will do it very well.

He thinks the war is going on as well as we could expect, but as you know he has always felt it would be a slow business.

R. is much more like himself and has been working quite regularly and is showing more interest in things.

Sunday, 10 March, 1918.

. . . I had to write to Healy of the *Irish Times* the other day and in his reply he said very nice things about you and said everyone thought you were doing so well and that Lord Rhondda ought to give you a freer hand.†

In practice I find one uses very few meat tickets. I only used two of mine last week. It is extraordinary how easily one adapts oneself to this vegetarian diet. Personally I don't miss meat at all!

There was quite a bad air raid on Thursday. My lady typist at the office arrived in quite a collapsed state on Friday as it had been close to where she lives and a number of houses had been entirely demolished.

R. is decidedly better and is taking a much more active part in things. . . .

87, Victoria Street, S.W.

St. Patrick's Day, 1918.

I understand that Dr. Truby King arrived last night and is being looked after by Jones, Acting-Secretary of the Overseas Club.

I have had a very busy week and R. is working full steam ahead again. I lunched with him on two different days and on Friday he had to entertain 6 Italian visitors who are connected with the Italian Aviation service. He took them to the Marlborough. We were 16 in all and it was quite interesting.

We have been doing very well in the air on the Western Front lately and are certainly keeping the Germans busy. It is very hard to find out whether their great offensive is going to take place or not.

When the new Air Force comes into being in 3 weeks' time, I believe I am to be a Major. R. has been very nice about it and from the moment I came to him told me he was going to see about

\* The Department of Propaganda in Enemy Countries.

† This refers to my father's job as Food Controller in Ireland. \*



## STRUGGLE

making me one. I expect that is about as far as I shall get in the military scale!

## THE GREAT GERMAN OFFENSIVE

Air Board Office, Strand, W.C.2.

23 March, 1918.

I am spending Sunday here as I have to be on the spot so as to keep R. in touch with things. There is desperate fighting going on and it is too early to say what is going to happen. We have had to give ground but on the whole I think things are going as well as could be expected. It is a very anxious time and the weather seems to be favouring the Germans.

If we can hold out for the next two weeks without giving up too much ground we shall not have done badly.

Truby King came in to see me on Thursday and is going to lunch with me on Wednesday. He is full of energy, though he finds everyone very slow here after America.

Yesterday I had breakfast with Lady Sandwich to discuss a scheme for looking after the Americans who are at our aerodromes throughout the country.

Air Ministry,

Easter Sunday, 31 March, 1918.

I had hoped to have had 3 days off duty but I only got Good Friday and was here yesterday and am here till lunch-time to-day. R. is away and so I have to be "on tap" to keep him in touch with things.

Everyone seems much more confident and I think we shall be able to hold them as reinforcements are coming up now. The Germans have had enormous losses and we have done wonderfully in the air.

I lunched one day last week with a Mr. Mawson, who is the British architect who is laying out the new Salonica, he is an interesting man and has ideas on town planning which interest me.

Of course we have all had very anxious times this past week but now that Foch is in command everyone seems much more confident.

87, Victoria Street, S.W.

Sunday, 7 April,

In bed.

. . . I am in bed with an attack of influenza! Isn't it a nuisance? I came to bed on Wednesday evening and have had a temperature of about 101-102 ever since.

Dr. J. has just been. My complaint has now developed into

mumps! It really is the limit. It started by influenza and the mumps only showed itself yesterday. Temperature now over 104. (*Letters to parents.*)

The lack of fresh air and the double task of doing my Air Force work and directing the Overseas Club in my spare moments (in the evenings and at the week-ends) was beginning to tell. Long before I succumbed to mumps I had been feeling run down. I could not understand why work, which in ordinary times was such a joy, became burdensome. I have always hated office friction and the controversy with some of the military elements at the Air Board worried me. I wished it had not been necessary, although some of my colleagues seemed to enjoy the prospect of a good fight.

At this time Rothermere frequently saw Winston Churchill and Beaverbrook. I now got to know the latter. I liked his lack of ceremony, his breezy Canadian manner. Perhaps he would have to wait for ten or fifteen minutes while my Chief was finishing some urgent air conference. Beaverbrook would seat himself in the armchair by my desk and discuss current problems in a friendly way. I was impressed by his incisive manner and by the extraordinary nimbleness of his brain. In a way he reminded me of Northcliffe. There was no need for long explanations; he had grasped your point before you had finished speaking. Till I saw Beaverbrook at close quarters I wondered how it was that he had obtained so great an influence in the inner councils of the nation, where he had been playing the rôle of Warwick the Kingmaker. He had been mixed up in many of the most vital discussions which finally resulted in turning out the Asquith administration. I now understood his success. He was an ideal negotiator. He had nothing less than a genius for bringing opposing sides together. The experience he had had in Canada in putting through big financial deals and arranging combines of divergent interests had been of great value to him. He understood the political game much better than Northcliffe.

The end of March was an anxious time. The great German offensive of 21 March, so long expected, had started. For ten days there were anxious consultations. The red boxes with the secret dispatches contained little of comfort. Some members of the Government got panicky and prophesied a German break-through and the capture of the Channel ports, though I was told that Lloyd George, Milner and Haig never wavered in their confidence. Members of the War Cabinet paid visits to my chief. I had to escort Smuts and Milner from Rothermere's room after interviews, through the labyrinthine passages of the Hotel Cecil to the main entrance. By the beginning of April the reports from France were more reassuring. G.H.Q. said the Germans were held.

Why need this severe attack of mumps have swooped down on me at one of the most vital moments of the war and when my chief was engaged in violent controversy with his opponents? My stock at the Air Board was still going up. I was a person of influence. Whatever happened in the internal dissensions I would probably be in an important position, besides no one for an instant considered the possibility of Rothermere's resignation.

After a fortnight in bed I was sent by the doctor to Bournemouth to recoup. Rothermere sent me kind messages. I was right out of the domestic crisis but apparently all was going well for he wrote me on 17 April :

Air Ministry,  
Strand, W.C.2.

17 April, 1918.

My dear Evelyn,

I am so glad to hear you are better. Please do take a few days holiday before you come back.

You have been out of all the fun. Sir Henry Norman and I have had really the time of our lives. We simply rounded them up and then clubbed them remorselessly ! I was so sorry you were out of the fray. There are many amusing anecdotes connected with it which I must tell you when you come back.

Yours,  
R.

## END OF A CHAPTER

Feeling better than I had for months and eagerly looking forward to the next six months at the Air Ministry, when I hoped Rothermere would be able to put through his various reforms now that he had overcome the opposition, I returned to London with high hopes. On the way from Waterloo to my flat I bought an evening paper. The first sentence that I read was "Resignation of Lord Rothermere." I could hardly believe my eyes. I was dismayed. I felt sure that had I been on the spot during those vital three weeks I could have altered my Chief's decision. Probably I was over-estimating my influence with Rothermere and forgetting that he was a sick man. Only at second-hand was I able to disentangle out of the jumble of events a coherent story—there had been comings and goings, midnight conferences with Winston Churchill and Beaverbrook, messages to Downing Street and finally resignation just when victory seemed assured.

Shortly after the resignation Northcliffe said to me "only my Mother and I know how ill Harold has been. At one time we feared a complete breakdown." In my view the only satisfactory explanation is that Rothermere's health was temporarily impaired by the overwhelming sorrow of the loss of his two sons—and especially of Vyvyan. If he had been well he would never have permitted himself to be manœuvred into an untenable position. By the time he resigned a debate in the House of Commons over the events at the Air Board was threatened. The Prime Minister had sufficient worries in other directions; sooner than face the embarrassment of a debate in the House of Commons he accepted Rothermere's resignation. Subsequently I discussed the events leading up to Rothermere's resignation with Beaverbrook. He confirmed my diagnosis. He said:

"There was a conflict between Churchill and myself over Rothermere's resignation. Churchill wished Rothermere to resign on terms which would have continued

the controversy and put Lloyd George in the position of maintaining a defence. I wished Rothermere to resign on the basis of putting an end to the controversy. My advice to Rothermere was to "stick it." But if he must resign, then the controversy must be killed by resignation; or it would have to continue to a conclusion followed by a resignation. Rothermere no doubt took his own course but it happened to coincide with my advice."

On 27 April I received this letter from my late chief:

Cherkley, Leatherhead, Surrey.

26 April.

My dear Evelyn,

I was so sorry to go without seeing you. At one time I thought I could hold on.

I do not know absolutely with certainty who is my successor, but I have done and am doing all I know to get Weir appointed. You should know by the time this letter reaches you.

He could not do better than appoint you his Secretary.

Yours always,

ROTHERMERE.

I am here for two or three days—Lord Beaverbrook's country house.

On Saturday, 27 April I wrote to my parents:

As you can imagine the news of R.'s resignation came as a complete bombshell to me. I think he has been terribly weak and I feel dreadfully disappointed. Of course he really is far from well and the doctors feared a nervous breakdown if he went on. Sir W. Weir is bringing his own staff.

Jenkins was very nice and wanted to know if I would like to return to him and I said I would let him know.

I think my letter was unduly severe on my late chief. I did not know how ill he was. I did not realise then that personal sorrow can sweep all before it. Beaverbrook took the letter of resignation round to Downing Street. He left Rothermere dozing on the sofa in his room. For days Rothermere had been suffering from insomnia. When he got back to the Hyde Park Hotel at lunch-time Rothermere

was in the same position on his sofa. Beaverbrook took Rothermere down to Cherkley, his lovely country place near Leatherhead, for a few days. But for some time Rothermere was almost beyond human comfort. Reaction had set in. He was no longer thinking of the Air Board, of its human pygmies, of its problems: he was engulfed in his sorrow.

In proportion to the high hopes I had held was the depth of my disappointment. To this day I am convinced that had Rothermere gone away to the Italian Front for two or three weeks immediately after his son's death he would have triumphed over his opponents despite his ill-health. But it was not to be. Once more my house of cards came tumbling down. For ten days even the rapid strides my Empire organization was making could not console me. For the only time in my life I went through the mortifying experience of offering my services and having them refused! On Rothermere's advice I went to see "Wullie" Weir,\* the able Glasgow industrialist whom the Prime Minister had appointed as Rothermere's successor. Sir William Weir was a "canny Scot" and probably quite rightly decided to be quit of the "old gang." I had been Rothermere's principal secretary, therefore I would be *persona non grata* with Rothermere's opponents who were now chortling over their victory. In the circumstances I think Weir acted wisely. I was given a fortnight's leave. I brought my Overseas work up-to-date and took a few days off.

\* Lord Weir.

# Chapter XXI

## A HECTIC MINISTRY

MAY, 1918

THE JOB I WAS LOOKING FOR—A CLOSE-UP OF BEAVERBROOK

# Chapter XXI

## A HECTIC MINISTRY

### THE JOB I WAS LOOKING FOR

AFTER thirteen months in the Air Force I handed over my keys and secret files to Sir William Weir on 29 April—an event disposed of in my diary with the words, “Felt rather horrible!” My hopes that I would be associated with one of the most successful war-time ministries, directly responsible for bringing about victory, had been shattered. As I walked through the swing door of the Hotel Cecil for the last time I took with me grateful memories of my late chief and his unvarying kindness, but also a keen feeling of regret that he had resigned.

Mementoes of my private secretaryship to the first Air Minister were a gold-leafed cap; and the Order of St. Maurice and St. Lazarus, which entitled me to wear a small white cross on a green ribbon on ceremonial occasions! I was now an outsider. No more red leather dispatch cases from Downing Street for me. “Everyone has been more cheerful,” I wrote on 4 May, “about the war news this week, tho’ I feel rather out of things as I no longer see the secret reports!”

But I was not to kick my heels for long. During my fortnight’s leave two departments at the Air Board and the Ministry of Information, under Lord Beaverbrook, offered me positions. I was invited to join the staff of the department which was linking up the Royal Flying Corps and Royal Naval Air Service. But when Lord Beaverbrook and Sir Roderick Jones invited me to take charge of the British Empire section of the Ministry of Information, I knew that here at last I had been offered a job for which I was specially fitted.

“The Ministry of Information job is much more after my own heart, but I don’t know if the Air Ministry will



let me go. Of course if they do it would be enormously interesting and I should love it." (*Letter*, 8 May.)

I went round to see Sir William Weir. He was kind and sympathetic. He knew that as private secretary to his predecessor I had only done my duty and that I had had nothing to say to the controversy which had been raging. When he learnt the nature of the position which awaited me at the Ministry of Information he realized at once that my first-hand knowledge of the Empire would prove invaluable. I think he was glad to show that he bore me no ill-will. Instructions were issued for my transfer. Brigadier General W. W. Warner wrote a kind letter to the new ministry ensuring that I did not suffer in rank or emoluments :

Air Ministry.

15 May, 1918.

The Master General of Personnel is quite willing to spare his services, but he feels that from the very good work Major Wrench has performed in the Royal Air Force, that in taking up these fresh duties, he should not in any way suffer. . . . You will understand that this is necessary before we officially place his services at your disposal, as we are anxious to look after our own officers when they go elsewhere.

W. W. WARNER, B.G.

On 14 May, Tuesday, my lucky day, I started on my nine months' career at the Ministry of Information and filled one of the most absorbing jobs in the Empire during that period. Normally Rothermere had been appointed "Controller for the Dominions and the United States" under Lord Beaverbrook, and I was to be his deputy, but in practice, owing to the state of his health, he came but rarely to the Ministry and during the last six months of the war I do not think I saw him half-a-dozen times. Subject to Lord Beaverbrook and Sir Roderick Jones, the control of this important section was left entirely to me. After I had been at Norfolk Street\* three months I received this letter :

\* The Ministry occupied the commandeered Howard Hotel in Norfolk Street, Strand.

Ministry of Information,  
Norfolk Street,  
STRAND, LONDON, W.C.2.

Dear Major Wrench,

So that your position may be regularised I confirm the arrangement which has been in operation for some months past whereby you act as Deputy to Lord Rothermere in his capacity as Controller for the Dominions and the United States, whenever Lord Rothermere is not available.

Yours sincerely,  
RODERICK JONES,  
Director of Propaganda.

The job of looking after British propaganda in the United States was in the hands of Major Ian Hay Beith, and I was delighted to have so charming and capable a colleague. There was no one better qualified for the position.\* As author of *The First Hundred Thousand*, Ian Hay had a large following across the Atlantic, and he had recently returned from one of the most successful lecture tours in the United States ever undertaken by a British lecturer. If Ian Hay had been a smaller man he might have resented the fact that as deputy for Lord Rothermere I was in a position to interfere with him. But Ian Hay has nothing petty about him. He knew he and I were only working for the cause; neither of us ever thought about our positions. As a result, till the end of the War we never had a moment's disagreement. We worked in the closest contact and one of the happiest memories I retain of the Ministry is working with him. To his sound judgment and commonsense I owe very much.

Marlborough Club,  
Pall Mall, S.W.

Saturday, 18 May, 1918.

. . . I started work at the Ministry of Information on Tuesday and have a nice room to myself overlooking Norfolk Street. Across the passage I have my secretary, whom I brought over from the O.S. Club, Miss McGowan.† You can't imagine the

\* With Ian Hay was associated Claude Bryan, but he subsequently went to the United States to supervise our work there.

† Miss McGowan has been my loyal and devoted private secretary ever since. She possesses to a supreme degree the essential attribute of a secretary—unvarying cheerfulness.

comfort of being able to dictate my O.S. Club letters and things if I want to. As far as all that side of things go, I have not been so happy since I joined up. As personal assistant I have such a nice young man, Eric Rice, who was at Rugby and is unfit for military service; he is perfectly excellent at human relationships.\*

Just at first I shall have to go slow and it is quite a difficult task finding out exactly where one's responsibility begins and ends. It is such a young Government office that there is a great deal of overlapping. But I am gradually getting the hang of things and I know I shall find the work very interesting.

I was down with Lord Beaverbrook this morning and find he has a very quick brain and I should think will do well in the position.

Of course all the time it is bringing me into touch with problems with which I am familiar. . . .

87, Victoria Street, S.W.

Sunday, 26 May, 1918.

On Friday Baden-Powell lunched with me at the Marlborough Club to discuss his idea of the O.S. Club working in close touch with the Boy Scouts Overseas. He wants me to look after the Scout movement overseas and I am thinking it over.† B-P came to lunch in his Scout uniform with bare knees, etc., and his Chief Scout ribbon tied round his neck. His work in forming the Scouts is really splendid, he is a genius, and very appreciative about the Overseas Club. . . . (*Letters to Parents.*)

Northcliffe sent me a kind letter of good wishes :

Canford Cliffs Hotel,  
Bournemouth.

My dear Evelyn,

I am so glad that you have got a new job to suit you.

I hope Harold is not returning yet. He has been a good deal worse than anyone except his Mother knows, and so have I.

I do not expect to be back for a month.

Yours affectionately,  
N.

15 May, 1918.

Three months later my work at the Ministry was referred

\* Apart from three years when he was private secretary to the Governor of Hong Kong Eric Rice has worked with me at the Overseas League, of which he is Assistant Secretary, ever since. He has travelled for the Society in all parts of the world and has friends in every continent. The Overseas League owes him a debt of gratitude for his devotion and services.

† I had to refuse owing to the claims of my own organisation.

to as follows in a leading article in the *Daily Mail*\* at Northcliffe's instruction :

Lord Beaverbrook has been responsible for excellent work and several excellent appointments since he took over the task. For example, Mr. Arnold Bennett, who has taken charge of French propaganda, understands French thought, is a skilled organiser, and a most accomplished writer. Lord Rothermere, who is Director of American Propaganda, has a thorough knowledge of American feeling.† Major Wrench, who is in control of Imperial propaganda, has proved his capacity by establishing the Overseas Club with a membership in the Dominions of 200,000. He has travelled in every part of the Empire, and is in close touch with Dominion sentiment.

I was greatly touched by Northcliffe's action because, as related in *Uphill*, at one time he and I did not see eye to eye as to the necessity for making my league entirely independent of the Press.

At last I was doing a job that I really understood. My fourteen years' experience in Fleet Street, my long apprenticeship with Northcliffe and Rothermere, my first-hand knowledge of the British Dominions and of the United States, all came in handy. All my life, without knowing it, I had been a propagandist.

In my new job I had full scope for initiative. Beaverbrook was, of course, the head of the Ministry but like all good organizers he gave his departmental chiefs plenty of freedom. My immediate superior was an old friend, Sir Roderick Jones, one of the nicest chiefs possible—a fellow journalist, who had had a successful career. For many years he was Reuter's correspondent in South Africa, and in 1915 he succeeded Baron Reuter as head of Reuter's Agency. Although not possessed of a strong constitution, he was a demon for work. His first-hand knowledge of the Empire was a great bond. It was a pleasure to be summoned to his room—however over-

\* *Daily Mail* leader, August 5, 1918.

† As a matter of fact, Lord Rothermere left all supervision of both British Empire and United States sections to me as recorded above.

worked he might be he always had a friendly word. He gave me his unwavering support. Like Beaverbrook and many other good organizers he is physically a small man. I used often to wonder if Northcliffe was right when he once said to me, "Very tall men, men over six foot, are rarely good organizers. In my experience it is the small men who have the brains." He used to quote the names of Napoleon and Nelson. Certainly in the Ministry of Information his theory was borne out.

We lived hectic days at the Ministry. Can any other department have had such a motley crew? Poets, Business Magnates, Music Hall Comedians, Soldiers, Bankers, Real Estate Dealers and Authors rubbed shoulders. Cheek by jowl sat professors who spoke the purest Oxford English that would have passed all the B.B.C. standards and successful cockney business men. One never knew what the day would bring forth. It was like being back at Carmelite House—the home of the *Daily Mail*. One morning my callers included Harry Lauder, the president of an American University, a newspaper cartoonist, Bishop Gore and Miss Elinor Glyn! In the course of the daily round I might have to run in to see Sir Hugo Cunliffe-Owen, of the British American Tobacco Co. and in charge of Far Eastern propaganda, Sir Henry Newbolt, Arnold Bennett, Sir William Jury, the film magnate, or Harold Snagge, a director of Barclay's Bank, the capable secretary of the Ministry. There must have been less red tape in our office than in any other government department. I sometimes wondered what the Air Board hierarchy would think of our methods. No doubt we wrote minutes and sent "jackets" circulating round but I have no recollection of them. When we wanted anything done in a hurry we went and got a "yes" or "no" straight away. Northcliffe once said to me, "every successful business has a 'yes-man,' whom one can get at without delay." There was always a "yes-man" in Norfolk Street—in the last resort Beaverbrook himself.





The Chief of the Ministry of Information, 1918—Lord Beaverbrook.

## A CLOSE-UP OF BEAVERBROOK

What manner of man was the directing brains of this remarkable collection of humans, whose task it was to tell the world about the British aims and achievements in the Great War?

There is an elusive something about Beaverbrook. Just when you think you have summed him up he does the unexpected. To present a correct picture is like trying to pick a bit of quicksilver off a plate! When I think of Beaverbrook I recall a remark of Northcliffe's, "Human beings do very surprising things. There is an unaccountable side to human nature which always keeps you guessing." Beaverbrook keeps you guessing.

One of the experiences I most looked forward to at the Ministry was the opportunity of watching him at close hand, of being able to compare him with Northcliffe and Rothermere, with whose careers his has some similarity—the initial struggles of the self-made man who acquired a large fortune at an early age. Beaverbrook started earning his living with the proverbial dollar a week wage—as a chemist's assistant—at thirty he possessed a fortune of over £1,000,000, when he entered British politics. I wished to observe the young Canadian who was largely responsible for turning out the Asquith ministry, which resulted in Mr. Lloyd George's premiership. Subsequently I asked Beaverbrook what he considered his greatest achievement. Without hesitation came the reply, "The destruction of the Asquith government, which was brought about by an honest intrigue. If the Asquith government had gone on, the country would have gone down."

Beaverbrook is a very small man, similar in build to his opponent in political outlook, Norman Angell! He has a wonderful forehead, arresting eyes, a staccato voice, very small feet, a delightfully infectious laugh and a rare sense of humour. He is a very unusual man. Beaverbrook at once puts you at ease. Despite my intimate



friendship with Northcliffe, extending over nineteen years, there was a slight sensation of awe in my feeling towards him. With Beaverbrook I have always felt that I could say exactly what I thought. He has no frills. Unlike some men in the public eye he does not seek to impress by striking attitudes. He does not take himself too seriously, although sometimes when talking about a subject dear to his heart he will address you as though you were a vast audience!

Beaverbrook has less "side" than anyone I have ever met. He cares nothing about clothes. On one occasion he laughingly displayed the tailor's label in a thirteen-year old suit he was wearing which had been bought in a manufacturing town in the north. He is the only press magnate I know who does not make a point of dressing well. He is very fond of children and one of the happiest pictures in my gallery of mental portraits is of Beaverbrook laughingly upbraiding his little grand-daughter of five, who had just been away for a visit, and saying "If you leave me again I will never talk to you any more." This young lady is said to know how to manage Beaverbrook under all circumstances—a secret which some of our elder statesmen would doubtless like to possess!

Beaverbrook has never quite grown up. There is still a large element of the boy in him. In a recent biography\* is a picture showing him, a lad of nine or ten, grinning from ear to ear and standing beside an elder boy in the snow-covered streets of his "home-town," Newcastle, New Brunswick. Young Max Aitken at that early age was facing life with a smile. He faces life with a smile to-day. Northcliffe would have been a much happier man if he had been endowed with Beaverbrook's sense of humour. The imp in Beaverbrook still enjoys practical jokes. In some moods he can be very lovable. Can this be the Machiavellian newspaper magnate who is painted in such sombre colours by his critics?

\* *Beaverbrook, the Statesman and the Man*, Edgar Middleton.

Beaverbrook has a wiry constitution. Like Mr. Lloyd George, he is a good sleeper. He does not take his problems to bed with him. He was taught by "Tim" Healy that the best way to discard a worry is to think of your last big worry! Advice which I have tried to follow without success. He is extraordinarily frank about himself. I heard him once describe himself as possessing "a great desire to do right, impeded by and interfered with by lasting loves and abiding hates." Beaverbrook was never an intimate friend of Northcliffe as he is of Rothermere. A curious turn of the handle of fate put him into the position, on behalf of the Prime Minister, at the end of 1918, of "having to keep Northcliffe quiet"—a task which must have kept even resourceful Beaverbrook, with all his knowledge of human nature, more than busy!

Like Northcliffe, Beaverbrook is catholic in his friendships. He likes rubbing shoulders with life at all its angles. Undoubtedly one of the reasons for Northcliffe's uncanny flair for anticipating the wants of the public was his ability to understand the point of view of the ordinary man. I often heard him express his indebtedness to ideas derived from talks with his chauffeur Pine, with "Sandy" Thompson his golf "Pro," on the telephone with the lady supervisor of the Carmelite House exchange—who was I believe appointed to the job on account of her discretion—with sea captains and with the waiters who brought him his breakfast when travelling on the Continent. Beaverbrook's contacts with life are also very varied—Business magnates, film stars, Tory and Labour politicians, social celebrities and reigning beauties. You will meet them all under his hospitable roof at Cherkley near Leatherhead.

When I served under him at the Ministry of Information I chiefly saw the successful organizer. I did not know how much of the crusader there was in his make-up. I know he is sometimes described as an out-and-out opportunist. I do not agree. Beaverbrook is obsessed by the Empire. His devotion to it is every bit as genuine as his devotion

to Bonar Law—one of the finest things in his life. Personally I think Beaverbrook's outlook is too limited. I have always been puzzled how so intelligent a man can preach a doctrine of "splendid isolation" in an age when you can fly from Britain to Baghdad in a day. I once asked him, "How would you prevent war?" I got this—to my mind—crude reply: "By avoiding all foreign commitments. By uniting the Empire in a common front. By developing the resources of the Empire to such an extent that our power to strike will give us freedom from molestation."

I have tried to convert him to my point of view that allegiance to Great Britain, to the British Empire, need not conflict with allegiance to the other three-quarters of the world; but in vain. It is a tragedy that Beaverbrook's undoubtedly great abilities are not used by the country. If I had my way I would give him the task of pulling down the slums of Great Britain or some other job that needs drive and initiative.

His friendship with Bonar Law—who also came from New Brunswick and was also a son of the Manse—was one of the most remarkable political friendships of our time. There never were two men more unlike and yet there were elements in the make-up of the two men that blended perfectly. Trilby required the magic presence of Svengali to exploit to the full her powers of song. Bonar Law would never have played the part he did during and after the war without Beaverbrook to urge him on—his natural diffidence and pessimistic outlook required an antidote. Beaverbrook first met the future leader of the Conservative Party in 1907, when he sought an interview in order to sell him some bonds in the Nova Scotia Steel and Coal Company. I asked Beaverbrook what his first impressions of Bonar Law were. This was the characteristic answer: "I knew he was big, but his head looked so small that he disappointed me. He bought some bonds! Afterwards he said he did so in order to get rid of me." I then asked him if he thought that Bonar Law was the

biggest man he had ever met. I got this reply: "I hold the view that John F. Stairs of Halifax, Canada, was the biggest man I ever met. He accomplished very little. He lived in a small community—like Bonar Law he was a good man. His bigness was thrown up by his goodness!"

This reply did not altogether surprise me, for I have always thought there were spiritual possibilities in Beaverbrook—just as there were in Cecil Rhodes. A friend once said to me, "I would never be surprised if Max had a religious 'conversion' one of these days." Neither would I. Whether the Divine spark in him will ever flare up into a flame I do not know. He may lack that mysterious element which can change men's lives. I believe Beaverbrook in his heart of hearts is a disappointed man. I fear the poverty of his early home, the hard struggle of his mother—stern and upright but with a harsh outlook on life—made him attach too much importance to the acquisition of wealth and worldly power. But a man who could expand from his early narrow Canadian nationalism to enthusiasm for a Commonwealth around the seven seas shows capacity for development. Will Beaverbrook surprise us one day by further spiritual growth? I hope so.

How would I compare the three Press Magnates? Northcliffe was undoubtedly much the greatest newspaper man and creative journalist. He was a genius in the world of newspaper presses and huge circulations. He was in a class apart. He understood popular journalism as it has never been understood before or since. At rare moments in his life he touched greatness. During the dark days of the war, when he determined to tell the country the truth about the shell shortage, cost what it might, he was great in his disinterestedness—the fact that he partially bowed before the storm of criticism does not detract from his initial act.

There was something missing in Northcliffe's make-up—he might have been so much greater. An extract from a

letter written to my parents in June, 1919, will serve to illustrate my meaning :

. . . On Friday I went to see the Chief as he sent for me to discuss Anglo-American relations. I found him full of energy and much concerned about our relations with U.S.A. and very anxious that we should appoint someone to Washington without delay. His operation takes place on Wednesday and apparently there is no need for anxiety. He is an extraordinary contrast ; after discussing really big things he switched on to arranging details with a member of his staff as regards the "Golden Slipper" he is offering in the *Daily Mail* for the actress with the smallest foot ! "

I could not understand this lack of discrimination in Northcliffe's make-up. How was it possible for a mind which had been absorbed in discussing a vital problem like British-American relations, on which he was a real expert and to the consideration of which he always brought an understanding sympathy of the American point of view, suddenly to switch over to a newspaper stunt? On many occasions he baffled me. On this particular occasion the golden slipper was examined from all angles, the "write-up" announcing the competition for the next issue of the *Daily Mail* was minutely scrutinised and corrected, every detail concerning the display of the slipper—at Harrods I think—was discussed. He threw just as much energy into the slipper stunt as he did into the problem of British representation at Washington ! While he was building up his great periodical business, planning "stunts" was a very necessary part of the day's work. When I was Sales Manager of the Amalgamated Press I had often to plan and carry out circulation schemes. But how was it possible for a man who capable of great acts in a national crisis and had been aiming at national leadership still to take an interest in so ephemeral a thing ?

Beaverbrook is quoted in Mr. Middleton's biography as recounting the story, with which I was also familiar, that at the end of the war Northcliffe was making arrangements for his manifesto setting forth what the peace terms should

be. The document was prepared by members of his staff.

As the reading of this vital document continued, it became increasingly clear that Northcliffe was not listening with attention. In reply to an enquiry as to whether he approved of the substance, he gave his staff to understand that his mind was fully occupied with distribution and means of attaining publicity. Thus a document of great importance to his reputation was given to the world with the utmost carelessness as to its meaning, but with vast ingenuity in securing that it should be read.\*

I have every reason to think this is a true record of what occurred, but in fairness to Northcliffe it must be remembered that his brain worked like lightning, that he could absorb the contents of a column of *The Times* faster than anyone I ever knew, that he had an uncanny sense of paging through an article in typescript and "sensing" its contents in a very brief space of time. He also had complete confidence in the individuals who drew up his manifesto. On the other hand Northcliffe disliked irksome detail. He saw life largely in headlines, and provided he was satisfied with the broad outline of the document I think it is highly probable that it was published without being read, as recorded above.

Elsewhere I have tried to sum up Northcliffe impartially and have sought to give the picture of him as he appeared to a young man who was devoted to him. I have always thought that there was a marked deterioration in his character in the last ten years of his life. But if to win the war—which was to create a better order of things, as most of us believed in 1918—was a desirable object, undoubtedly Northcliffe played an important part in that achievement, although I think he was given a disproportionate amount of credit for the work of his department at Crewe House in stimulating the final German collapse. If Northcliffe had understood the moves of the political game as well as Beaverbrook he would certainly have been

\* *Beaverbrook, the Statesman and the Man*, Edgar Middleton, page 82.

a member of the War Cabinet. Some day the inner history of his relations with Mr. Lloyd George will be published. It was a disaster from the national standpoint that when a strong hand was urgently required in 1915 to take over the Air Force Northcliffe was not offered the job. When the Prime Minister offered him the position in 1917 he was aiming higher. I think at that time he undoubtedly thought he was stronger than Mr. Lloyd George and had visions of himself as Prime Minister. He thought Mr. Lloyd George was going to take him to Paris as one of the peace delegates and he envisaged a "Lloyd George-Northcliffe peace." The only satisfactory explanation of the origins of the feud between Mr. Lloyd George and himself that I have ever heard is that on some occasion the Prime Minister may have expressed the hope that Northcliffe would be able to come to Paris while the fate of Europe was being decided. Mr. Lloyd George had apparently no intention of taking him as one of the British delegation. Northcliffe certainly thought he had been let down by the Prime Minister. Mr. Bonar Law, I understand, always ridiculed the suggestion. But I am wandering from my theme.

Of the trio, Rothermere is in my view the most reliable. You always know where you are with him. He is endowed with a large measure of shrewd commonsense. He came to play the rôle of a newspaper magnate more or less by accident. If young Alfred Harmsworth had not started *Answers* and invited his younger brother Harold, then a clerk at Somerset House, to join him, Rothermere would probably never have come to Fleet Street. In all likelihood he would have struck out in business for himself. Rothermere has much the greatest financial brain.

One of the earliest pictures I had of him was as a happy carefree father at North End Place, his Hampstead home, or on the Norfolk Broads, surrounded by his family and playing tennis. Fate has dealt hardly with him. I am

sure he would gladly give up his wealth and his power for that life, far removed from the limelight, of thirty years ago. Rothermere has a kind heart and does many acts of generosity the world never hears of. I remember once as a very young man going to stay with him at Monte Carlo. There were several other young men from the Harmsworth business in the party. On the day of our arrival we each found an envelope with £40 in it so that we should not be hampered for funds during our holiday.

Rothermere possesses an uncanny instinct for foretelling election results. I have several times known him to prophesy changes in the strength of parties with extraordinary accuracy. In foreign affairs I do not think his judgment is as good and I have frequently disagreed with his diagnosis of conditions in Europe. He is, I think, too apt to take an alarmist view of current events. I have heard Northcliffe say on several occasions, "Harold is inclined to be panicky." At the same time I think that Rothermere has not received his deserts in connection with the part he has played in recent years in interpreting nations to one another. He was one of the first English journalists to study Fascism and Nazism at first hand. In the *Daily Mail* he boldly explained the aspirations of Italy and Germany at a time when the majority of the British Press were hostile to both countries. Only last year Rothermere said to me, "I have given instructions that my papers are not to make any attacks on foreign countries."

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## Chapter XXII

A DREAM THAT CAME TRUE

## Chapter XXII

### A DREAM THAT CAME TRUE

**I**N a varied life certain years stand out for their connection with some special undertaking—1918 is my American year. At the Ministry of Information, as the months passed I became increasingly involved in the absorbing task of seeking to promote understanding between the British and American peoples. American matters now took up a major part of my time.

What exactly was my job? Not an easy question to answer, for it ranged over a wide territory. It was, subject to my two chiefs, to supervise the work of the Ministry in putting the British case and the story of British achievement before the peoples of the British Empire\* and the citizens of the United States of America. We divided the English-speaking world into two sections, the British Empire and the United States. Each section worked separately although they both came under my jurisdiction. Our activities were very varied. They included the distribution of leaflets, books, diagrams and maps and posters in every language spoken in the Empire; the sending of lecturers on speaking tours throughout this vast territory; the inviting of distinguished educationists and university professors from across the seas to study the British effort at first hand; and, finally, the inviting and welcoming of Dominion and American journalists to the old land. The series of parties of United States editors, newspaper correspondents and journalists whom we personally conducted through industrial England and Scotland, and whom we enabled to see Ireland and to visit the Battle Fleet and G.H.Q. in France, was an unqualified success. Many of these editors and writers returned to their own

\* India and the Far East came under special departments. There were also special sections for War Photographs and Film propaganda—this last under Sir William Jury.

country with an entirely new conception of the fundamental part Great Britain—and especially the British Navy—was playing in the world war.

The word propaganda has come to have an evil significance. But I agree with my friend the late Mr. Ivy Lee\* who wrote :

The essential evil of propaganda, therefore, is not in the effort to disseminate ideas. That is legitimate. The evil is the failure to disclose the source of the information. You can defend yourself against the impact of ideas or emotions if you know whence they come.

Mr. Lee, in a paper written in 1934, asked :

What could have been more shocking than the vast expenditure which we know the Tsarist Government made to the French Press in 1906 to seduce the French people into the purchase of Russian bonds? The French people believed that their own Press was giving an opinion favourable to these bonds in the interests of French investors. . . . we should exorcize secret propaganda.

Judged by these standards there was nothing reprehensible about our work. It was above-board : the world knew that our job was to present the British case in the best possible light and we threw ourselves with enthusiasm into the job. On the subject of War propaganda Mr. Ivy Lee has some qualifying remarks to make. He says :

War is but legalised murder, and the pragmatist may argue that since the objective is to win at all hazards but with a minimum of murder, any measures less criminal than murder are warranted in the pursuit of the primary aim. Hence the justification for deceiving the people at home and for lying to the enemy. If murder is moral, lying and deceit become moral.

Mr. C. R. M. F. Cruttwell, in a recent broadcast on "War—The opportunity for Mass Propaganda" said :

To practise a rigid economy in truth is necessary, both because the

\* Mr. Ivy Lee, who was one of my closest American friends, died in the autumn of 1934. He was said to be the most highly paid propagandist in the world. Among his clients were the Standard Oil Company and many of the largest concerns in the United States.

nerves of the people could not bear the full truth, and also because its knowledge would be of vital importance to the enemy. To take a single instance: If the British people had been told at the end of April, 1917, that nearly a million tons of shipping had been sunk that month, that there was barely a month's supply of wheat in the country, and that the Admiralty could think of no effective remedy, such a communication would have been merely equivalent to signing a capitulation with Germany.

Those who have devoted much time to the task of helping nations to understand the viewpoint of their neighbours come at an early stage face to face with the problem that the same set of facts may look entirely different when seen from a different geographical centre. Environment, education, mass suggestion, prejudice, reiteration, have all contributed to create divergent views. But during the war we had neither the time nor the inclination to dissect our motives. The immediate task was to win the war, to fortify the mental armaments of the English-speaking peoples.

Great events were happening in the spring and summer of 1918. By May we were told the danger of a German break-through to the channel ports had passed. By the beginning of July we knew that 1,000,000 Americans, largely by the aid of the British Navy,\* had been landed in Europe. Allied hopes began to rise rapidly and the spirits of our foes to flag. In mid-July the world was shocked to learn of the execution of the Tsar and Tsarina and their family at Ekaterinburg. By 20 July the Germans had re-crossed the Marne and by the beginning of August the British offensive at Amiens had started. Hardly a week passed without some epoch-making event. In no period of the war was I less absorbed in the daily war news. I had become engrossed to the exclusion of all else in the realization of a dream. The moment in my life that I had been waiting for had arrived. Twenty years

\* When General Pershing bade farewell to Great Britain in 1919 he said, "Of course no American can think of the British Navy without giving it almost the entire credit for the possibility of there being an American army here—the British Navy made it possible to have an American Army in Europe."

of longing and aspirations were being translated into fact. I hardly realized the things that were happening within me.

Not a day passed that I did not meet some of the increasing number of Americans who were hurrying across the Atlantic. Soldiers, sailors, professors, Y.M.C.A. and social workers, clergy, lecturers and journalists were to be found in my office. To me the American was a fellow citizen of the English-speaking world. Our two Commonwealths were engaged in the greatest crusade in history.

The coming of America to Europe to fight shoulder to shoulder with the allies was a very important thing from my standpoint. It was *the great outcome of the war*. Anglo-Saxon solidarity was at last a reality. I agreed with Walter Hines Page that the ending of the hundred and forty years' estrangement between the English-speaking nations was "the most momentous fact in the history of either people." The world for me could never be the same again. Since my school days I had imbibed Cecil Rhodes's teaching. I had first discussed English-speaking co-operation as a young man of twenty-three with Wilfrid Laurier at Quebec. As the years passed I had discussed the same theme with W. T. Stead, with Albert Lord Grey, Page, Northcliffe and Moreton Frewen. My conviction as to the vital need of a British-American understanding was steadily growing. Occasionally there were set-backs to my enthusiasm when the two nations seemed temporarily unable to understand each other. But I remember in 1908, on a railway journey to Philadelphia, hardly being able to sit still in the parlour-car because I so longed to be able to play a part in dispelling the fog of misunderstanding.

During America's neutrality I tried to forget my previous dreams. Evidently I had been wrong. When America threw in her lot with the other English-speaking nations I knew I had a distinct and personal part to play in the drama of reconciliation. I knew the time for starting my movement, which would do in the broader field of the

English-speaking world what the Overseas Club had achieved in the Empire, was at hand.

In my wildest moments I had never imagined myself in a war job in which during office hours it would be part of my work to promote Empire unity and British-American friendship. There was no need now to put aside till the evening or till the weekend the ideas which thronged my waking consciousness. I was in a state of great mental elation. Spiritual forces are difficult things to describe in print. But my love for America and my longing for the coming together of the English-speaking peoples were sacred strands in my make-up. I could no more not have acted as I did than a cork on the surface of a river in spate can remain stationary. No outward event in my life, apart from my crusade round the Empire in 1912 and launching the All Peoples Association in 1929, has stirred me so deeply as the establishment of the English-Speaking Union in 1918.

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# Chapter XXIII

JUNE—JULY, 1918

STARTING THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING UNION

## Chapter XXIII

### STARTING THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING UNION

*The corner-stone on which the League of Nations will have to be built will be the friendship of the English-speaking peoples. . . . The sacred task to which we now set our hands is to perpetuate the comradeship of the battlefield for all time, and thereby to help forward the freedom of the world and the things we hold dear.*—WRITTEN IN 1918.

WHEN I was a young man with Northcliffe I used to watch that great organizer at work. How did he manage to direct so many different undertakings simultaneously? In the course of a day he would turn from selecting a subject for a *Times* leader to discussing the autumn melodramatic serial for *Answers*, from planning some blood-curdling new feature for the *Weekly Dispatch* to considering further developments in the pulp mills of his company at Grand Falls, Newfoundland. His secret was concentration. Every undertaking had a compartment in his brain. When he had finished dealing with one problem it was shut up in its compartment; it did not exist while he threw himself into his next job.

But Northcliffe also possessed another merit. He only enthused about one thing at a time. He would be concentrating on the *Times* for instance. Perhaps for a month on end its welfare and development would be his major concern. The *Times* compartment in his brain always remained open during this period. The other compartments received but cursory attention. Then perhaps he would switch off temporarily from the *Times* to some "stunt"—in which he was interested—like standard bread, sweet peas or cheap cottages. For a brief while everything else took a secondary place. On a much smaller scale I have tried to order my life on a similar plan. When I was building up the Overseas League, I was primarily absorbed in it. When the turn of the English-Speaking Union came, I concentrated on British-American relations.



It was only when it was successfully launched that I was able to move on to something else.

When your whole being is focussed on some special object, you are lucky if you can find an outlet for it at the psychological moment. On occasions I have yearned to help certain work, such as slum-clearance, but no opening came and the enthusiasm had to be damped down. In 1918 fate was kind to me. The auguries were propitious and I launched the English-Speaking Union under exceptionally favourable circumstances.

In the spring of 1918 hardly a week passed in which outward circumstance, did not add fuel to the flame. My job suddenly brought me in contact with the leading Americans who had come to Europe to help forward the prosecution of the war. I met General Pershing, the American Commander-in-Chief. There was an unfathomable something about him; you felt great reserves of strength and independence. Some time afterwards I learnt that two years previously he had experienced a terrible tragedy. His wife and three little daughters were burned to death at the Presidio Barracks, San Francisco, in 1915. No wonder there was a veil of reserve round him, which a casual acquaintance could not penetrate.

I also met on many occasions in 1918 Admiral W. S. Sims, who commanded the United States naval forces in European waters. Born in Canada, the gallant admiral was an enthusiastic worker for English-speaking friendship. When he came to England in 1910 he made a speech which got him into serious trouble with the authorities at Washington. The remark that nearly caused Captain Sims's dismissal was: "If the integrity of the British Empire were ever to be seriously threatened by a European coalition, he was of opinion that the British nation could count upon every ship, every man and every dollar from across the sea." "To say that this raised Hell," said the Admiral when he discussed the episode, "would be to put it mildly." A demand for his dismissal arose. President Taft had to bow before

the storm. But Captain Sims had influential friends and he got off with a public reprimand. No American was more welcome at British-American gatherings than he.

I am sometimes asked to explain wherein the English-Speaking Union differs from the Overseas League. The difference is fundamental. The latter exists to promote unity among the peoples of the British Empire and membership is confined to British subjects. The essential aim of the English-Speaking Union is to make the peoples of the United States and the British Empire better acquainted. Not only to introduce Britain to America, but Kansas to Cape Town and Seattle to Sydney. To promote by every possible means a spirit of comradeship amongst the peoples of the English-speaking democracies.\*

The summer of 1918 is a jumbled memory. Ten hours a day at the office were frequently followed by some English-speaking function at night. Every day had its scheme or preliminary lobbying to be done. There was the task of selecting the committee and office-bearers; of telling the story to American friends. At my office in the Ministry there was a constant stream of callers. No one left my room before a membership form had been placed before him. Among my earliest victims were Sir Harry Lauder and Arnold Bennett; the latter complained that as he already "belonged to 40,000 societies he could take no active part in it!" In the first fortnight of the Union's existence I enrolled fifty members.† Everyone was fair game. By Christmas the total of my victims was 200. In those days I was a much better membership getter than I am to-day. I was carried forward by my enthusiasm no obstacle seemed unsurmountable. I genuinely considered I was conferring a favour in admitting the newcomer into our circle! As the years pass I have become more diffident. I often wish I could recapture my earlier technique; nowadays I am

\* The aims and objects of the English-Speaking Union and a list of the chief events in its career will be found on pages 487-496 of the Appendix.

† The membership fee was £1 os. od. or five dollars.

too ready to sympathise with my victim. Why should he join another society? But in 1918 no qualms interfered with the relentless pursuit of the quarry. I went to see friends who had affiliations with America. Lord Bryce, probably the most successful emissary this country has ever sent to America, gave me cautious encouragement. Lady Bryce is, I am glad to say, still a valued member of our Committee.

Every time I walked to lunch at my club in Pall Mall I received fresh inspiration. Passing U.S. officers, wending their way to the Washington Hut in St. James's Square, were quite unconscious of the effect their presence had on me—they were fellow citizens of the English-speaking world, the entity which now claimed my ultimate loyalty. Every American uniform sent a strange thrill through me. I re-read as many of my favourite books on English-speaking relations as I could, including W. T. Stead's *The Last Will and Testament of Cecil John Rhodes* and Stead's original article addressed "To all English-Speaking Folk" in the first number of the *Review of Reviews* January, 1890. Stead's idea of establishing a magazine, to be published simultaneously in London, New York and Melbourne as the mouthpiece of his crusade, was a great conception. I hoped that one day the English-Speaking Union would possess a magazine of its own which would carry on the work of Rhodes and Stead.

In my vision of a re-united English-speaking world I refused to be drawn into the advocacy of any definite political scheme, nor did I suggest any formal alliance. Once the debris of past misunderstandings, bickerings and jealousies had been cleared away the relationship of the two sections of the English-speaking race would take care of itself. Cecil Rhodes had at the back of his mind a definite political unity. In 1891 he expressed to Stead his readiness to adopt the course from which he had at first recoiled—viz. that of securing the unity of the English-speaking race by consenting to the absorption

of the British Empire in the American Union if it could not be secured in any other way. In his first dream, he clung passionately to the idea of British ascendancy—this was in 1877—in the English-Speaking Union of which he thought Great Britain was to be the predominant partner. But in 1891, abandoning in no whit his devotion to his country, he expressed his deliberate conviction that English-speaking re-union was so great an end in itself as to justify even the sacrifice of the monarchical features and isolated existence of the British Empire.

Events had moved since Rhodes's day. Even the nations within the British Commonwealth had become virtually independent states. Provided the two great English-speaking commonwealths acted in unison there was no reason why Great Britain should not have a constitutional monarchy and the United States be a republic. I recognised that the race centre of the English-speaking peoples was now on the North-American continent where two-thirds of its number were to be found.\*

I longed for the help of Rhodes's or Carnegie's millions.† I went in search of rich men. In 1918 I was much more successful in collecting large donations than I am to-day. I got a thousand pounds each from my friends John Astor‡ and Sir Thomas Latham. My American friend Alexander Smith Cochran of Yonkers once more came to my aid. After a dinner *à deux* at the Café Royal he sent me a cheque for £1,000. I then started to collect a hundred pounds each for three years from twenty friends. I considered that the task of putting the society on a self-supporting financial basis would take that period, as proved to be the case. Amongst

\* Of 165 millions of white English-speaking people, 110 millions lived in the United States and Canada and 55 millions in the British Empire in the rest of the World. As early as 1856, in *English Traits*, R. W. Emerson wrote of America as "the seat and centre of the British race." p. 261 (Boston reprint, 1894).

† I have never had a penny of Carnegie money for my work although I was attacked by the anti-British press in America for being a paid minion of the Carnegie Fund!

‡ Major J. J. Astor of *The Times*, a cordial supporter of the English-Speaking Union and always a ready helper of good causes.

those who came to my aid were Northcliffe, Sir William Berry,\* "Jimmy" White, "Solly" Joel, Claude Johnson, F. E. Powell† and Sir George Mills Makay.‡ Collecting money in the summer of 1918 for British-American friendship was comparatively easy—the tide was with us. Usually within ten minutes I emerged with a substantial cheque in my pocket. During this particular campaign I only had two turn-downs. In after years when engaged on similar tasks I have thought longingly of the combination of circumstances that made the appeal practically irresistible. I wore an invisible armour of belief in my cause and confidence in myself. I was certain I would succeed. Every extra name on my list sent me with even greater assurance to the next victim.

The new organisation was first referred to as "The English-Speaking Union" in my diary on 12 June—previously I had called it "The Overseas Club of America." In the first issue of the *Landmark*§ I thus described our ambitions :

One day it hopes to have buildings in London, New York, Chicago, Washington, Cape Town, Montreal, Melbourne, Sydney, Wellington, St. John's and elsewhere, dedicated to the cause of the English-Speaking Union. Perhaps it is not too much to hope that the day will come when the local branches of the E.-S.U. will be as widespread as offshoots of the Y.M.C.A.—a great chain of fellowship which will encircle the globe.

In New York and London we envisage great buildings, with the comforts of a well-equipped club, with newspaper rooms containing all the leading journals of the English-speaking world, with a library of many of the greatest works telling of the history of the English-speaking peoples, with a lecture hall open to every movement dedicated to the services of the English-speaking peoples and of humanity.

The actual launching of the scheme took place in the

\* Now Lord Camrose.

† Chairman of the American Chamber of Commerce in London and for fifteen years Vice-Chairman of the Union. No cause ever had a better friend. F. E. Powell is an altruist with no thought of self.

‡ Another warm friend who enrolled large numbers of members and helped in the task of collecting money.

§ The magazine of the English-Speaking Union.

sedate atmosphere of the private dining room of the Marlborough Club on 28 June, 1918. I invited fifteen friends\* to dine, all of whom were sympathetic to the idea. Among them were John Buchan, Ian Hay and Boylston Beal, private secretary to the American Ambassador. Professor MacNeile Dixon said, "Why, it is such a very simple idea, I can't understand why no one else has done it before." After an excellent dinner the assembled company were in a receptive mood, and I outlined the scheme. The guests in five-minute speeches gave their views. Seated at the large round table were representatives of:

England, Scotland, Ireland, Wales, Pennsylvania, Illinois, Iowa, Massachusetts, Victoria (Australia) and the British West Indies.

The assembled company, despite a knowledge of the difficulties, were unanimous that the time was ripe for starting the movement. They promised their support.

Extracts from letters written at this period follow:

87, Victoria Street, S.W.1.

Sunday, 16 June, 1918.

I have had one of the busiest weeks in my life.

I am looking after the U.S.A. Section at the Ministry as well now, but it is all extremely interesting and I can't tell you the difference from the Air Board work.

87, Victoria Street, S.W.1.

23 June, 1918.

. . . I have had another very full week with constant interviews and any spare time I had was spent in thinking out my English-Speaking Union, which I hope to get going soon. I am enclosing the aims and objects and when I am ready I will write to you again as I want you to get as many members as you can in Ireland. I think Cochran may help me in connection with it, but I shan't know till next week. Claude Johnson of Rolls-Royce has given me £100 and I am busy getting a committee together.

I am much upset by Lord Curzon's speech and if the Government has no scheme ready for Ireland it will have a disastrous effect

\* The names of the fifteen guests will be found on page 487 of the Appendix.

in the Dominions. Among others I had interviews last week with Lord Bryce, Sir Edward Kemp (Canadian Forces—he is in charge of all the Canadians in Europe), E. Price Bell of the *Chicago Daily News*, Sir R. Baden-Powell, Harry Brittain and many others. . . .

I find Ian Hay Beith a very nice man to work with.

I had two or three talks with Professor McLaughlin of Chicago University and was able to help him to get into touch with people. He was my first American member.

Elmwood, St. Peters, Kent.

Sunday, 30 June, 1918.

. . . I got down here at 5.0 yesterday afternoon and found Northcliffe by himself. He is much better but still has this bronchial cough. He could not possibly have been nicer and we went out into the garden and ate strawberries and then lay on the grass and had a good all-round talk about the war. I told him about my English-Speaking Union and he was much interested and I think will help. As we were lying out in the garden we could hear the guns in Belgium every now and then!

I had my dinner on Friday at the Marlborough Club to discuss the E.-S. Union and to decide on plans and it went off very well. I had the private room and very sumptuous fare.

We have formed a little committee to draw up a plan and the large committee will meet again in 2 weeks' time. So I felt well pleased.

87, Victoria Street, S.W.1.

Sunday, 7 July, 1918.

. . . I have had a very busy week but I am glad to say all went off well. The Inter-Dependence Meeting on 4 July at Westminster was a great success and everyone was pleased about it; we must have had over 3,000 at it. I was especially glad as a week before it came off Beaverbrook got anxious and it was left entirely to Ian Hay and me to run. After the meeting I lunched with Hay and Sir Randolph Baker at the Savoy and we went on to the baseball match afterwards. I only stayed an hour as I had to be back at the office. The King and Queen went in a simple open carriage without any outriders and he talked to the baseball players and altogether struck just the right note.

The "E.-S.U." is going strong and I have enrolled over 50 members myself so far. We had our first Executive Committee meeting on Friday. We have taken as offices a nice top floor in Lennox House, Howard Street, a building about 50 yards away from the Ministry of Information and just on the other side of the Strand from the Overseas Club. So my two shows are within 200 yards of each other.

87, Victoria Street S.W.1.

Sunday, 21 July, 1918.

. . . On Tuesday I went to a public lunch to the Canadian editors and next week we expect the Australian and New Zealand pressmen. The E.-S. Union is getting on very well. Northcliffe gave £100 and two other people gave me £100 and everyone seems to be taking great interest in it.

On Thursday I lunched with a man called Hawkins who is secretary of the "Atlantic Union" to see if there was some way we could co-operate.\* The present membership of the E.-S.U. is 130, so it is moving!

Everyone is much cheered up by the war news and it certainly looks as though Gen. Foch was all that he was said to be. If only we can stand up to Prince Rupprecht's expected offensive we should soon be in a good position as American troops are still pouring across.

87, Victoria Street, S.W.1.

Sunday, 28 July, 1918.

. . . On Tuesday we had the second dinner of the E.-S.U. at the American Officers' Club—Mr. Powell in the chair. We have got some good Americans interested. I am doing a lot of spade work and all goes well.

On Thursday night I dined at the Marlborough Club with Loring Christie, Sir Robert Borden's right hand man, a very interesting young Canadian of the Philip Kerr type. He is very much in the know and I liked him greatly. On Friday I lunched with a Major Dunning, in the American army, whose ideas run very much on my lines and who is going to help a lot. I think he will be very useful.

Then the New Zealand journalists arrived late on Friday night and I had to look after them yesterday and go to a lunch in their honour given by Beaverbrook. I have seen quite a lot of the latter and like him very much. The President of Cornell University is also over here and I have to look after him so you can see that there is not much time left over. (*Letters to Parents.*)

The first printed reference to the English-Speaking Union was in the *Daily Mail* on 10 July and the first reference in the American press was in the *Philadelphia Ledger*.

For six weeks my enthusiasm was red-hot; all seemed

\* The Atlantic Union was amalgamated with the English-Speaking Union early in 1919.



plain sailing. Then came the inevitable reaction, perhaps accentuated by an attack of influenza. After nearly all moments of great elation in life there follows a period of flatness. It comes to all young organisations and is the testing time. Sometimes it lasts for weeks, sometimes for months. In the case of the English-Speaking Union it was of comparatively brief duration. I soon recaptured my initial fervour. I have often thought that starting new undertakings is comparatively easy. At the outset everything seems to be going well. The creator of the scheme is engulfed in his own enthusiasm and generates further energy as he progresses. But frequently some extraneous circumstance or maybe ill-health brings him down to earth with a bang. He feels like a pricked balloon. In a detached manner he critically looks at his recent activities. How could he have felt such transports of emotion? But if his cause is destined to endure, the enthusiasm will return, and with it an abiding conviction that he is building on solid foundations.

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# Chapter XXIV

## WAR—LAST PHASE

AUGUST — NOVEMBER, 1918

HERTFORDSHIRE LANES—TWELVE WONDERFUL WEEKS

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## Chapter XXIV

### WAR—LAST PHASE

#### HERTFORDSHIRE LANES

AS the war continued we became increasingly accustomed to restrictions of every sort. When the fourth anniversary came, Government control was so much part of our lives that we found it difficult to jump back in our minds to the pre-war world in which we lived in July, 1914. The individual did not count. Without realising it Europe was being prepared for the age of dictatorships, when an attempt would be made to dictate even the thoughts of the citizen. But there was one aspect of this interference with our liberties which was stimulating. It made us feel linked up with our fellows as never before. The knowledge that the King and Queen and the humblest citizen had the same ration cards and were subject to the same restrictions was invigorating. All shared alike. We were all part of the State. Its welfare was a matter of supreme importance in the life of each individual in a way never realised before by our generation. The increasing control of our food supplies had been so gradual that it had not been irksome, and Lord Rhondda performed his job with tact.

In the Press food news was only second in importance to war news :

The papers, in spite of the incredible amount of news for which they have to find space, are devoting columns to the food problem. In a copy of the *Daily Mail* through which I glanced recently, there was a leading article on "Pigs and Potatoes," a column on "Horse Steak," numerous letters on national kitchens, paragraphs on Food Card queues and on eggs, and there are actually "Rationing Notes" in *The Times*.\*

By now we were adepts in filling in official forms and no longer demurred at sending our signed declarations

\* Winifride Wrench, *Overseas*, May, 1918.

to the grocer when applying for our sugar tickets entitling us to our weekly ration of half a pound, although my sister wrote at the time, "There have been many heart-burnings over the household cards, for the age as well as the name of each person has to be stated and I know a parlourmaid who much resents the grocer's errand boy knowing how old she is." When staying with friends we brought our meat, butter and sugar cards with us. In the case of meat it was necessary to send the card in advance. Many persons learned for the first time that by dispensing with meat and by rising from table still hungry their health benefited. We lived in an age of communal kitchens and food queues. We realised anew how dependent we were on other nations for our daily comfort. There was a growing scarcity of paper. We carefully opened the letters of our friends so as not to spoil the envelopes, using them again by the aid of gummed labels on which the new address was written. Every scrap of paper was jealously hoarded for future use.

No one knew how long the war would last. Some of the best-informed journalists were furthest out in their calculations. Rothermere anticipated a further three years war in July, 1918, while Northcliffe said to Hamilton Fyfe in September, "None of us will live to see the end of the war."

Sunday, 4 August, 1918.

It seems extraordinary to think that it really is four years ago since the Sunday I went over to Paris and found things in that state of turmoil. In the *Sunday Pictorial* this morning Lord R. writes of another three years of war!

I have had another very full week meeting all sorts of people including President Schurman of Cornell University, and Melville Stone of the American Associated Press. . . . I have seen quite a lot of Beaverbrook. He is a very "live wire." . . .

Our War Memorial Fund is not running quite as rapidly as I should like, but still it is always the first rungs of the ladder which are the difficult ones. It is £2,500 so far.

One evening I dined with a man called Lee Murray to meet several of the Labour leaders—Barnes, John Hodge and G. H. Roberts. I thought they were fine simple men.

The war news is very cheerful and everyone is much bucked up. It is a great vindication for Lloyd George as he wanted the Unity of Command from the outset.

Sunday, 11 August, 1918.

The war news has really been wonderful, in fact it has been so good that one is almost afraid that it can't last! It is perfectly splendid and will do a lot to re-establish belief in Haig. The Germans have certainly had all they want these past four weeks and if only Foch is able to keep it up the war might really be over by the end of next year. I should not be surprised if Foch comes out of the whole thing as the greatest General.

I have been in constant touch with Northcliffe and he could not be nicer and I think wishes he could get me back to the fold! I saw him on Monday and he is always discussing American problems with me.

I had President Judson of Chicago University to lunch with me on Wednesday. He is such a nice old man and is going to Persia in charge of an important American Mission.

The Australian editors are due to arrive to-day. The South African editors are due at the end of the week. Among my other visitors was the Prime Minister of Newfoundland.

*(Letters to Parents.)*

The task of financing the war during 1917 and 1918 was one of the Government's major problems. An old friend and colleague of Carmelite House days, G. A. Sutton,\* then the Chairman of the Amalgamated Press, was summoned to the House of Commons by Bonar Law in the Autumn of 1917. The Chancellor of the Exchequer came straight to the point: "The Government is in need of twenty million pounds a week for an indefinite period. Will you see the matter through?" Sutton readily undertook the task for which he was so well qualified. For nearly thirty years he had been closely associated with the two Harmsworth Brothers. He was in charge of all Northcliffe's major advertising schemes. Sutton was a complete master of the complicated business of launching new enterprises. He understood how to spend twenty thousand pounds on Press advertising in three or four weeks with the maximum result.

Bonar Law could not have made a better choice for the

\* Sir George Sutton, Bart.

post of Hon. Director of Publicity to the Treasury. For fifteen months Sutton was in entire control of the National War Bond publicity campaign and was primarily responsible for raising over £1,600,000,000—I believe a world record. Incidentally, Sutton's campaign opened the eyes of the British Government to the power of advertisement. Sutton prepared his campaign with great thoroughness. He was determined to startle the public out of its apathy—and he did.

"It was just like a big game," Sutton said. "First we had to popularise the idea—make saving fashionable in fact—hence the advertising campaign. Then we had to utilise the spirit of local patriotism to the full by getting the larger towns to compete for results." Huge posters soon appeared on every hoarding, whole pages were taken in the Press, editorial write-ups were obtained and every cinema proclaimed the country's urgent need of money. Then followed the Tanks campaign, during which these ungainly landships toured the country and raised millions of pounds. A "Feed the Guns" campaign was also organised during which batteries were sent throughout the land. A "Business Men's Week" was launched and raised £145,000,000. Large cities were asked to provide the funds for a super-dreadnought, costing two and a half millions, smaller towns were invited to provide a mere hundred-thousand-pound submarine. I have often wondered why the post-war Government did not employ equally intelligent methods in dealing with the slum problem.

. . . . .

My last war-time holiday consisted of ten days after an attack of influenza in August, 1918. I went to stay in a Hertfordshire village within thirty miles of London. The village pub in which I lodged looked out on the green, where browsed a friendly nanny goat. I took my meals with cousins who had hired a red-brick cottage proud of its title "Mafeking Villa." After long days spent bicycling in Hertfordshire lanes we would return to

Mafeking Villa with ravenous appetites for supper. Our meal, consisting of eggs and home-grown salads, watercress and cheese, was served in the parlour. Owing to war-time rules the dark blue blinds were drawn, and by the light of an oil lamp when the weather was bad we devoured our repast. Even the stuffiness of a sultry summer night could not affect our appetites.

The beauties of Hertfordshire were a revelation. Ribbon development had not yet desecrated the Home Counties. We hired bicycles at St. Albans and experienced forgotten joys of cycling again. In 1918 there were few cars in the lanes.

Near military hospitals and camps we passed Australian and New Zealand soldiers enjoying the unknown delights of a summer in the Old Country; for escort they had village maidens. During the war I tried to collect a symposium of oversea soldiers' first impressions of the Motherland. Among them I find:

The old country is like a cultivated garden. I never saw anything like its roses and green country lanes. (*A Newfoundlander.*)

Your sun is much less powerful and strikes me as being several sizes smaller than ours—quite a toy sun in fact. (*S. African.*)

I love your long twilight and the beautiful rivers fringed with willows, and your winding streams. And the hedges running at all angles across the countryside. (*Australian.*)

I was surprised to see so much pasture and park land lying idle. (*Canadian.*)

Not so welcome were the comments:

It is a pity our boys so often meet English girls of the Piccadilly type. (*Canadian.*)

It is almost unbelievable to us that a nation whose standard of civilisation is so highly respected throughout the world should allow such terrible slum conditions. (*Australian.*)

I was amazed at the miserable, bedraggled poverty I saw, at the women hanging round the public houses and at the poor undersized children. (*American.*)

The first time I ever saw a drunken woman was at Devonport, the day after I arrived. It was the saddest thing I ever saw. (*Canadian.*)



## TWELVE WONDERFUL WEEKS

The last twelve weeks of the war were breathless—all concerned with the Dominions and United States sections of the Ministry had to work at high pressure. Parties of editors from Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa were either coming or going. At fortnightly intervals specially selected groups of the leading journalists in the United States arrived at Liverpool. Each party was treated as if it alone were visiting Great Britain, the battle area and the Grand Fleet. I established personal contact with every individual; many warm friendships date from then. Welcoming our English-speaking visitors from across the seas was no empty ceremony, for our hearts were full. I think all of us connected with the Ministry regarded the visits in the light of a great home-coming. The leaders of the newspaper and periodical Press in Anglo-Saxondom had come together at a dramatic moment. The journalists were determined to like one another. Their anticipation was keyed to high pitch, nor were they disappointed. Many of them arrived at the most exciting period in the war. From mid-July the tide had begun to turn. We were emerging from the four years' tunnel of frustrated purpose and continuous disappointment. The dark days of the spring, when we wondered whether our line would hold, when we had prepared our minds for the fall of Amiens, the separation of the British and French Forces and the digging in of the British armies along a modern Torres Vedras, were now but a hideous nightmare. In July the moment we had been waiting for had arrived. Marshal Foch, now the Generalissimo of the allied forces, struck, and Haig began his hammer blows.

Day after day came encouraging news. At first we were sceptical, we could hardly believe in our changed fortune. We waited apprehensively for a German counter-blow on a grand scale. Continuous reports from many quarters stated that the German morale was weakening;





July, 1918.

(Reproduced by special permission of the proprietors of "Punch.")

The Fourth of July, 1776-1918.

JOHN BULL: "'Doth not a meeting like this make amends'?"

UNCLE SAM: "Sure!"

the initiative had passed to us. This time the optimism really seemed justified. We were living in a state of great mental elation when the editors were with us. Our joy was only outdone by theirs.

London was temporarily the centre of the English-speaking world. All America seemed with us. I had hoped originally to go to the Front with two of the most influential parties of editors, but to my grief I was unable to leave London. Important American statesmen and Congressmen were arriving every day—men such as Swager Sherley, Chairman of Committee on Appropriations in Congress, Carter Glass of the United States Treasury, and Carl Vrooman of the Department of Agriculture. They required personal attention.

The appearance of the American troops in the battle area had now begun. Daily bulletins recorded attacks by General Pershing's forces on an increasing scale. The American army was very much there. The moment for which the war-worn Allies had waited had come. The United States troops might still have much to learn of modern war technique in the hard school of experience but their presence was beginning to make itself felt. Those lanky "doughboys" yearned to be in the thick of the fight. A French officer was heard to remark "*Ils n'ont l'air de trouver rien de plus simple que de se faire tuer.*" Their presence depressed the spirits of the enemy in proportion to the stimulating effect it had on the British and French. I have often thought that there was a tendency in Europe in after years to minimise the part played by America in bringing the war to an end. After the Russian *débâcle*, Allied man-power was getting used up. The knowledge of the existence of that potential army of twelve million unscathed Americans waiting to cross the Atlantic, and of the vast financial resources of the United States, was a fundamental factor in creating the will to victory. A leading British war correspondent wrote in July, "They (the Americans) are going to be a decisive factor in the war"—and they were. Mr. Hamilton

Fyfe thus wrote of the American Expeditionary Force in the summer of 1918 :

But of one of my prophecies I am proud. That is the prophecy that the troops raised by conscription in the U.S.A. would make as fine an army as any in the field. . . .

I visited a camp of U.S. soldiers in the autumn. I found in the ranks men of French, Italian, German, Austrian, Swedish, Norwegian, Russian, Turkish, Filipino, Cuban, Porto Rican origin. Many had to be taught English words of command. . . .

The young American is taller and more sinewy than the European. He has a look in his eye—I call it the Fourth of July look—which speaks of self-dependence, resolution, freedom from anxiety about his livelihood, freedom from conventions which cramp the right to live fully and without fear.\*

But in the late summer of 1918 there was no tendency to minimise the American effort. Fifteen months co-operation and the growing magnitude of the American preparations made us forget the days of American neutrality. The American editors had, I think, expected to find a lack of appreciation of their effort. To their surprise and gratification they found enthusiasm for things American. Never before had the relations between the English-speaking peoples been so cordial. We almost forgot from which part of the English-speaking world we came. What did it matter whether we had been born in Ulster or Utah? In a supreme moment of the world's history Americans had no inclination to look for British condescension. Britons had no desire to criticise American lack of reserve. We were language-brothers, and even more important, we shared a common outlook on the things that mattered. Our peoples had rediscovered each other. Never again should we be divided.

I went down to Liverpool to welcome one of the parties of editors. After a thirteen days' crossing they were overjoyed to be on shore again. We talked incessantly on the way to London—the journey was like a meeting between old friends after a long parting. Happy friendships with Edward Bok, of the *Ladies' Home Journal*,

\* *Overseas*, July, 1918.

Ellery Sedgwick of the *Atlantic Monthly*, Frank R. Kent of the *Baltimore Sun*, Mark Sullivan, Albert Shaw of the *Review of Reviews*, and Richard Oulahan, date from this period. The editors wished to meet the Sinn Fein leaders, in view of America's deep interest in the Irish question. I gratified their desire. They were free to talk with whomsoever they wished. We made no attempt to influence their views. We knew the right policy was to let them see exactly what they wanted. It was for them to make their own conclusions unimpeded by official interference.

A special feature of our programme was a series of small dinner parties that I arranged. I realised for the first time how easy it is, if you are part of the official hierarchy, to carry through almost any scheme. All doors are open. Government departments stick together. If you are on the inside you possess a magic formula denied to outsiders. This was the only period in my life when I was able to entertain lavishly at the taxpayer's expense! A subservient Treasury in those happy days made no bones about passing expense sheets for work of national importance. I would invite some leading statesman such as General Smuts, Mr. Prothero or Lord Eustace Percy; among newspaper proprietors Northcliffe or Burnham; or among editors Geoffrey Dawson, Owen Seaman, Leo Maxse or J. A. Spender; among writers John Buchan; and leading divines such as Dr. Jowett or Dr. Horton, to join each party. Twelve Englishmen would be sandwiched between twelve Americans. We tried to place those of like interests side by side.

One dinner especially stands out in my memory. We were a party of twenty-four in a private room at the Ritz. General Smuts had consented to act as host. After dinner there were informal addresses, and General Smuts made a delightful speech about the war effort of the British Commonwealth. Later in the evening General Jack Seely\* passed me a chit asking who was going to propose

\* Now Lord Mottistone.

the Chairman's health. And he added: "As the only man present who has actually had a shot at him (I admit a reflection on my marksmanship) and then sat in Council with him, I should like the job." I had already asked Edward Bok of the *Ladies' Home Journal* to propose Smuts' health but I naturally invited Seely to support the toast. Our American guests were spell-bound. In a witty speech "Jack" Seely described how he had taken careful aim at Smuts during the Boer War, fortunately without success. This was unrehearsed propaganda with a vengeance! Here was a Dutch patriot who had fought Great Britain sixteen years before, and now was one of the supreme directors of the destiny of the mighty British Empire, exchanging chaff with a British General who had tried to shoot him among the boulders of a South African kopje. The conception of Great Britain as the oppressor of small nations portrayed in some American school books and so frequently proclaimed by Irish-American patriots, was evidently as dead as the dodo. We had many other exciting parties at eating houses ranging from the Carlton to the Cheshire Cheese in Fleet Street, but we never staged anything quite so dramatic as that dinner at the Ritz with its unrehearsed chaff between Smuts and Seely.

The culminating event in the visits of the oversea editors was the informal visit to Sandringham when they enjoyed the hospitality of the King and Queen. I have heard many Dominion and American editors extol the friendly bearing of their royal hosts and the amazing grip of world affairs displayed by the King in his talks with his visitors.

And so the days passed and life seemed almost like a fairy story. Everybody was pleased with everybody else. I never had so many compliments paid to my work. We all shared in the bouquets that were being thrown. There were no worries in those last war weeks, from our standpoint. Not that we were indifferent to the sufferings of our men at the front. But we were engaged in promoting

unity among the English-speaking nations and undreamt of success was attending our efforts. The news from the various fronts was continuously good. There was no doubt about it now. We were really winning all along the line. We were surfeited with great events. We had no emotion left. One week I recall good news from the British forces in Bulgaria, on the Sea of Galilee, in Arabia, in Serbia, at Archangel and in Africa—truly the war effort of the British peoples was stupendous. We had, of course, likewise to admit the tremendous achievement of Germany in the past four years, when her troops were engaged from the Belgian coast to Baghdad and during which she was the mainstay of her allies. Few nations in history can have faced such odds.

The last weeks of the war were like an explosion on the battle front. For weary months the sappers had been laying their coils and fuses, they had been digging and delving, they had been making careful preparations, tunnelling here, burrowing there. Then all of a sudden the great explosion took place and a hill was blown into the air and a landscape changed. Metaphorically speaking, the hopes of the Central Powers were blown sky high in those weeks as the result of the patient work of the previous years. Within thirty-two days the following events took place in quick succession, starting with the surrender of Bulgaria on 29 September: the fall of Damascus, King Ferdinand of Bulgaria's abdication, the taking of Le Cateau by the British, the clearing of the Belgian coast, the resignation of Ludendorff, the suing for peace by Austria and the granting of an Armistice to Turkey. And in ten weeks the allies captured a quarter of a million prisoners.

The following are extracts from letters written during the last ten weeks of the war. The chief impression they make is that of their inadequacy. I should have expected dissertations on the great moment of history through which we were passing!



## STRUGGLE

Sunday, 1 September, 1918.

I had meant to have gone over to France for three days with the Dominion journalists but I simply wasn't able to spare the time. On Tuesday I lunched with John Buchan. He has helped me a lot about the E.-S.U. . . .

I have seen Beaverbrook several times and he is always most friendly. . . .

Everyone is very cheerful about the war news though I think it is much better not to expect miracles and be satisfied with our steady progress and then we shan't be disappointed.

Sunday, 8 September, 1918.

I have seen quite a lot of Beaverbrook and he has been very appreciative, and I find him such a nice man to work with.

Sunday, 15 September, 1918.

It has been a very full week and on and off I have been seeing a lot of the American Editors, and I really think I have made friends with most of them and that I shall always be able to keep in touch with them on a friendly basis in the future. On Tuesday night a dinner was given in their honour at the Ritz Hotel, at which Mr. Prothero, Board of Agriculture, Lord Islington, Sir S. Worthington-Evans, Minister of Blockade, Mark Sykes and others spoke. . . .

On Wednesday the E.-S.U. had its first public function and entertained the American Editors to lunch and Arthur Balfour presided. It was a most successful function at the "Criterion." I sat between Balfour and Dr. Shaw of the *American Review of Reviews*. Balfour said very nice things about you, F., and said he was so sorry he saw such a little of you nowadays. I had to introduce him to everyone and he spoke charmingly. . . .

Everyone was very pleased and I roped in the four most important members of the party as Vice-Presidents and eight as members of the E.-S.U., so I was well satisfied. . . .

Everyone is much bucked-up by the War news. They are certainly having their troubles in Germany and only beginning to realise what they are up against.

Sunday, 6 October.

The Dominion Editors left yesterday and I saw them off at Euston, they all seem to have enjoyed themselves very much. . . .

I lunched with Campbell Stuart one day, he was the Chief's right hand at the British War Mission to the U.S.A. They are rather pleased with themselves for doing their Bulgarian propaganda

so well ! On Thursday afternoon I went round to see Lord Reading and had a talk with him, as I expect he will soon be going back to America.

Sunday, 13 October.

I have had a tremendously busy week. The party of American editors arrived late on Monday night after an awful journey—13 days, the last 5 in a real gale—in a bad ship battered down for several days and Spanish “flu” on board with many deaths and one of the convoy driven ashore on the Irish coast.

We came up to London on Tuesday and I have been at a whole series of functions. On Wednesday, as Beaverbrook was ill, I had to welcome them at the official lunch, on Thursday they lunched with Northcliffe at Printing House Square to which I went. I sat opposite Conan Doyle. On Friday the E.-S.U. gave its first big public lunch—200 people present at the “Criterion.” It was a tremendous success and Balfour made a great speech. I sat next Admiral Sims and next but one to Balfour, with the Editor of the *Daily News* on my other side. In every way it was a success. In the evening I took them to the Cheshire Cheese and I had to speak. They went down to see the King to-day. . . .

How terrible it was about the *Leinster*. I wonder if it will have any effect in Ireland, one would certainly think so. . . .

Admiral Sims told me he thought the war might be over in 6 weeks’ time, but I think he was unduly sanguine !\* The news has been wonderful and I believe the Germans are having a really bad time.

Sunday, 20 October, 1918.

On Tuesday the first party of American editors left and I lunched with the Chief at his home first and then went up to Euston to see them off. They all took away with them the happiest memories and I think the visit was a great success and that when they get back to America they will do the British cause a lot of good. The Chief continues to be very affable.

On Friday night Rothermere gave a small dinner at the Marlborough, in Arnold Bennett’s honour. Lord R., Arnold Bennett, Mr. Hughes (Prime Minister of Australia), Sir Henry Dalziel, who has recently bought the *Daily Chronicle*, Blumenfeld, Editor of the *Express*, Eric Hambro, Caird, Admiral Sims, Hulton, the newspaper proprietor, Winston Churchill and myself. It was very interesting hearing all their views on the ending of the war. I think the general verdict was about 6 months’ time. Though prophecy is a dangerous game.

\* The gallant admiral overestimated by two weeks.

Sunday, 27 October, 1918.

The 2nd American party of journalists is in France and the 3rd doesn't arrive till the end of the week and the 4th next week. The third party consists of religious editors and the fourth of trade journalists. There is no question that these tours are having a great effect and the tone of the American Press towards Great Britain is changing very much.

Sunday, 3 November, 1918.

The fourteenth rainy Sunday in succession! Another full week. I was very sorry about Beaverbrook's resignation as he was a most satisfactory man to work under and his loss will be greatly felt at the Ministry. Owing to the war news, there is great uncertainty about the whole future of the Ministry and I think it is quite likely that it will be shut down. It will be extraordinary to be a free agent again and to get back to one's own affairs, though I have not yet made up my mind what I shall do as regards finance.

You probably saw in the papers that Lord Cowdray had given £100,000 for the Royal Air Force Club. The Air Ministry has asked me to join the Committee of Management which is very nice of them and which I will do. . . .

On Thursday I lunched with Sir George Riddell,\* a great friend of Lloyd George's, and heard much inner gossip.

On Thursday evening the third party of American editors arrived—they represent all the leading religious papers in America, one of them is the son of the famous Moody. (*Letters to Parents*).

On 9 November the abdication of the Kaiser was announced and his flight to Holland took place the following day. The great event we had been living for had come at last, for to us the Kaiser was the symbol of Prussian might, Prussian efficiency and the Prussian war-spirit. Once the influence of the Kaiser and of the military clique was eradicated, we believed that Germany would adopt a democratic form of Government and settle down as a happy member of the European family. It was unfair to visit on the heads of the German people the sins of their rulers.

In an article in *Overseas* in December, 1918, Lady des Voeux relates the story of an old prophecy concerning the Kaiser's downfall. I recollect her recounting this story in pre-war days:

\* Subsequently Lord Riddell.

Stories of the Kaiser are amongst the earliest recollections of my childhood. Princess Amelie of Schleswig-Holstein, who was the aunt of the Kaiserin, lived for many years at Pau, in the south of France, where we spent the winters, and she used to tell my mother many interesting details about the German Royal Family. Her niece's marriage had been very unpopular with her own family. The proud Schleswig-Holsteiners looked upon the young Prussian much as some old world family may look upon the parvenu their daughter is marrying, and they bitterly resented the condescending attitude of the royal bridegroom.

There was a curious prophecy in Schleswig-Holstein said to have emanated from some famous old witch a hundred years or so ago, to the effect that a great monarch would arise in Prussia who would hold sway over the German peoples and become one of the mightiest potentates that the world had ever seen. He would be the father of six sons and one daughter and be crippled in one arm. His boundless ambition would win for him unparalleled successes; he would rise to the dizzy heights but before his death would be able to assemble all his possessions under the shade of a lime tree.

How well I remember hearing this story again and again and seeing the interested excitement with which the Princess watched the growth of her niece's family: specially do I remember the occasion of the little daughter's birth, the seventh child, and of the Princess saying almost triumphantly to my mother, "Well, all the first part of the prophecy is now fulfilled."

Sunday, 10 November, 1918.

The E.-S.U. lunch on Thursday at the "Criterion" was a great success and we had 200 people there and Lord Robert Cecil took the Chair. . . .

On Thursday I had quite an interesting party to meet the American religious editors at the "Cheshire Cheese." Geoffrey Dawson (*Times*), Owen Seaman, Leo Maxse, Stanhope, Lionel Curtis, Thorp and others, and it all went off very successfully. . . .

Late that evening at 11.0 the fourth party of American editors, trade journalists, arrived at Euston and I escorted them to their hotel, so altogether I have done my duty in the cause of English-speaking unity!

There were enormous crowds for the Lord Mayor's Show yesterday and everyone was in a very cheerful mood. (*Letter to Parents.*)

During the last weeks of the war the English-Speaking Union made rapid headway. It is a great moment for

those who start movements when their idea assumes concrete shape and when for the first time they can look at a large gathering of supporters. This moment came for me at the lunch given by the English-Speaking Union at the "Criterion" on 11 October, when I asked Mr. Balfour to welcome the American editors. The news of the sinking of the Irish cross-channel steamer *Leinster* the previous day by a German submarine had just been received and the atmosphere was charged with electricity. It was on this occasion that Mr. Balfour coined the phrase, "Brutes they were and . . . brutes they remain," which was flashed round the globe. Mr. Balfour spoke with great feeling and when he sat down his remarks were greeted with a hurricane of applause. Doubtless a German speaker could have roused his hearers to similar transports of emotion if he had dilated on the massacre of German women and children as a result of the British blockade. From the German standpoint, death by drowning on a steamer torpedoed in broad daylight on the high seas may have been speedier and more humane than death from starvation. This is not the place to compare the methods of carrying on the war adopted by the belligerents. I merely record the first large public function\* of the English-Speaking Union because it was a notable occasion and brought our society prominently before the world. I think this was the first occasion on which our name was flashed along the cables on the bed of the Atlantic. Mr. Balfour was an enthusiastic believer in the cause of the English-Speaking Union. He became the President of the British organisation in response to a formal request which John Buchan was kind enough to make to him on our behalf, and Mr. William H. Taft became the head of our sister society in the United States.

Beaverbrook retired from the Ministry at the end of October owing to ill-health. His place was taken by

\* Our first public function was a lunch of forty on 11 September, 1918, also to a party of American editors and also held at the "Criterion", at which Mr. Balfour also made a speech of welcome.

Arnold Bennett. I was sorry when Beaverbrook left us. I had always enjoyed working under him, and I found him a most appreciative chief. He wrote to my father, "Evelyn has done exceptionally well in starting the English-Speaking Union. In fact, all his work has been of the greatest use to the Ministry"; and from the Hyde Park Hotel, where he was laid up, he wrote me a farewell letter expressing the hope that work or pleasure might bring us together again. Arnold Bennett was a very unalarming chief, and on the first morning of his term of office upbraided me for calling him "Sir"! He was a very likeable man. There was something appealing in his manner. I liked his stutter, his tousled hair and his laugh.

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## Chapter XXV

ARMISTICE DAY, 1918

## Chapter XXV

### ARMISTICE DAY, 1918

WHEN I drove down to the office on 11 November, I knew that the result of the armistice discussions between General Foch and the German envoys would be announced at any moment. Peace seemed a certainty, but nevertheless there was still a lingering doubt in my mind. The unexpected had always happened in this war. Just after ten my cousin rang me up from the Overseas Club to tell me that a girl on our staff had rushed into her office out of breath to say that she had heard privately from her young man, who was behind the scenes, that at eleven o'clock the firing was to stop on all fronts.

At eleven the maroons sounded and I flew down the stairs of the Ministry into Norfolk Street and across the surging crowds in the Strand to my cousin's office at the Overseas Club at General Buildings. She told me that a member of the staff was in her room when the maroons sounded and that she had burst into tears, saying "Frank will not come back." Poor woman, her married life had consisted of just a few war-time leaves. Every day during the war there was gnawing anxiety at her heart. And then one day after three weeks' silence a letter came, the long-expected letter, as she hoped, from her husband. Instead it was a letter of sympathy from his friend who was with him when he was shot through his heart. And now what did the ending of the war matter to her? There was nothing to live for. He would not come back. All her determination to enter into the universal rejoicing when the maroons sounded was swept away. She knew there were tens of thousands of war widows. Cold comfort. Her thoughts were back again in June three years before, on the honeymoon at a Surrey Inn.

. . . . .



It is impossible now to recapture the intensity of feeling of Armistice Day, 1918. Although its coming had been expected when the maroons sounded something seemed to snap inside us. Mixed emotions swept through me. Great gratitude for peace, an outburst of pent-up excitement, a sensation of participating in mass-consciousness, a feeling of uncertainty as to the future, an eager anticipation of a better world, a deep compassion for all who had suffered, and above all the lifting of a stupendous weight. The haunting fear—never admitted in words—that the forces of darkness might triumph and everything the English-speaking world stood for be swept away was banished once for all.

But it was no time for ruminating. I yielded to the desire of the moment to share in the general excitement, though my emotions did not take the form of those of a friend's elderly cook, who despite her rheumatic joints kept running up and down three flights of stairs and finally collapsed in a chair in the pantry! London was a city gone mad. I was swept along by the crowd past the Admiralty Arch to Piccadilly. For that one day we were all members of one great family. Everybody talked to everybody else. All our defences were down.

"Where is your British reserve? We thought you were an unemotional nation," said my transatlantic editor friends. "Why, Broadway couldn't go madder than this."

A November drizzle did not affect our spirits. London was a mass of excited and happy human beings. We were children once again. Nothing surprised us. When a pretty girl rushed up and kissed a blushing French officer in his pale-blue uniform no one was astonished! The crowd cheered. All London, that could afford it, drove. A pound for any distance was the recognised taxi fare. London vehicles must have good springs—I saw taxis loaded with fourteen or fifteen singing, shouting mortals. The passengers sat on the roof or beside the driver, or stood on the footboard. When the buses came to a

standstill, the crowds danced on the roofs and blew whistles or penny trumpets. In the excitement bus conductors forgot to collect fares. The Londoner just jumped on to a passing bus and sat on the bonnet or wherever he could find space.

Australian troops, in response to the cheering of the crowds, gave such coo-ees as had never been heard before in Whitehall. Outside Buckingham Palace, when the King and Queen appeared, there was a roar of cheering, and salvoes were given for Lloyd George, Haig and Foch. Canadian soldiers yelled their refrain:

“ Rah, rah, rah !  
Rah, rah, rah !  
This is the end of Bill Kaisah !—  
Did we win it ?  
Well, I guess  
Canada ! Canada ! Yes, Yes, Yes ! ”

Everybody joined in.

My sister thus vividly describes a drive on a bus through London on Armistice Day :

In Victoria Street a group of Australian “ boys ” accompanied by a band and their girls decorated in red, white and blue were swinging down towards Whitehall to the huge delight of all spectators. Later I saw them again in the Strand wheeling carefully at their head two legless companions in a bath chair. In Whitehall we got blocked, but what did it matter ? We danced on the ’buses, we danced on the lorries, we danced on the pavement, we shouted, we sang. I never knew before that a small car could carry twenty folk who did not mind how tight they sat, or that forty happy men and girls could caper on the roof of a ’bus, but so it was, for I am only telling you what I saw with my own eyes. And the din ! Everybody was making a noise ; some soldiers on the top of the Admiralty had seized the office coal-scuttles and were banging them with sticks ; the office boys and girls at the War Office yelled to their companions across the way ; we cheered and cheered again and again, while the Church bells rang out a peal of jubilation. . . .

As I passed down Charing Cross Road I noticed a Scot playing

the bagpipes and some elderly charwomen and wounded "Tommies" dancing in a circle to his tune—a crippled soldier was waving the Belgian flag from his crutch. Turning into the Strand—a sea of laughing, joking people—I came in the nick of time to see the King and Queen drive by in a carriage and pair escorted only by four mounted policemen.



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# Chapter XXVI

A WORLD AT PEACE

REACTION—LAWRENCE OF ARABIA

# Chapter XXVI

## A WORLD AT PEACE

### REACTION

WE no longer lived in a world of drawn blinds and darkened streets. London thoroughfares were once again illuminated. Flashing searchlights were no longer sweeping the sky in search of hostile aircraft. Trafalgar Square soon became normal. During the last phase of the war it had resembled a huge theatre. War pictures were thrown on the screen at the base of Nelson's column. A corner of devastated France, with ruined church and shattered houses, had been erected there. They had brought the war home to the passer-by.

Many went through a period of acute depression soon after peace came. After the excitement of the closing weeks of war inevitable reaction set in. It was difficult to adjust oneself to the new and changed world. My diary of 20 November states, "Finding life rather difficult these days, everything is up in the air." There was a proposal to establish a special American Information Section of the Foreign Office, to be situated at Crewe House,\* and I was asked to take charge. But a few days later the Government decided to abandon the scheme.

Depressing news reached me from America concerning the English-Speaking Union. There were dissensions in the group that was organising the movement there, and I was asked to mark time. The knowledge that some of the American supporters of the Union were disunited was disturbing. How was it possible for there to be squabbling among workers for the cause of unity? Alas, I am now wiser. I no longer expect miracles. Some of the

\* Hitherto occupied by Northcliffe's Department of Propaganda in Enemy Countries.

bitterest feuds I have witnessed have been in connection with work for international understanding.

I experienced a phase of acute depression. I lost faith in my scheme for the time being and in my ability to carry it through—though I am glad to say this lack of confidence was not of long duration.

I thought of St. François de Sales' words. "Every complaining spirit implies some dissatisfaction with God's decrees and a good deal of self-love."

Disenchanted egoism, that was it!

. . . . .

On a November evening I attended the Benediction Service at Westminster Cathedral. Nearby was an infantry officer praying. His face was buried in his handkerchief and his body was shaken by the sobs he was trying to control. Poor fellow, I wondered what his sorrows were.

In the vast and dim spaces of the Cathedral his soul found refuge. He walked slowly past me to the holy-water stoup. The sign of the cross appeared to signify his acquiescence in the great mystery of existence—suffering. In moments of extreme sorrow the tortured being *sees* God. He may not understand the *why* of life, the enigma of suffering may still baffle him. But his heart finds rest in the knowledge that he is in the sanctuary of the Man of Sorrows. There is no aspect of human anguish which cannot be laid at the foot of the Cross.

#### LAWRENCE OF ARABIA

The task of reconstruction now began. The statesmen were busy attempting to build a new and better world. Ordinary mortals had their personal problems to deal with, to put their affairs in order, to clean their shabby houses and flats, to buy new curtains and chintzes. Tens of thousands of people engaged on war work suddenly found themselves without jobs. The streets began to have a pre-war appearance. Oversea fruits, including

oranges, bananas and pineapples, appeared once more in the windows of the shops. In February I wrote :

One morning last week, as I emerged from the Temple Underground station, it came as rather a shock to notice that we had returned to newspaper bills. Confronting me was a row of placards with the words, "West End Shooting Affray—Colonel and D.S.O. Involved." Owing to the paper shortage, newspaper contents bills disappeared from the streets of London in March, 1917, and quite frankly they have not been missed. Contents bills are unknown in America, and one does not find them in Paris. Surely this was one of the pre-war institutions that we might have dispensed with.

Extracts from letters written during the concluding weeks of 1918 follow :

Sunday, 17 November, 1918.

F. arrived last night looking very well and laden down with all the lovely butter and eggs and other supplies you got him to bring over to me. I had a delicious fresh egg for my breakfast to-day. . . .

I will be photographed at an early date and will send you one for your birthday, only I don't want to be in uniform, as I am not a proper soldier and I hate giving a false impression to anyone who sees it. . . .

I dined one night at Dr. Johnson's house\* with Cecil Harmsworth. It was an interesting gathering. Henry Dickens, son of Charles D., H. B. Irving, J. Forbes-Robertson, Birrell, E. V. Lucas, W. W. Jacobs, Rothermere and others.

On Thursday Mrs. Humphry Ward gave a lunch for the Editors. The Duchesses of Atholl and Marlborough, Dame Katharine Furse, Mrs. Randall Davidson (Archbishop's wife), the head of the W.A.A.C.'s, Mrs. Alfred Lyttelton and others.

On Thursday dinner with General Smuts as a farewell to the second party of editors. . . .

The Ministry of Information definitely closes on 31st December. I should like a clear year to devote myself entirely to Overseas Club and E.-S.U. before looking round to think of earning any money.

Sunday, 24 November, 1918.

I got £1,000 from Martin for the War Memorial on Friday—£500 this year and £500 next, which is encouraging.

The E.-S.U. is going very strong, and if only I get a little time to devote to it I can make it a very big thing. . . .

The idea of the American Section of the Foreign Office or rather

\* Generously given to the nation by Mr. Cecil Harmsworth.



of the Ministry of Information going to Crewe House, where Northcliffe's office was, has been approved. And I believe I am to be in charge for the next few months. I am not over keen as I rather fear there will be a lot of red tape at the F.O.

Saturday, 1 December, 1918.

During this transition period at the office I am working at the Overseas Club two or three hours daily which enables me to get into touch with everything. . . .

I have had a very full week. On Thanksgiving Day I lunched at the "Pilgrims" and it was a great occasion with the Duke of Connaught in the chair. The two speeches were made by Lord Reading and Mr. James M. Beck, the American lawyer and politician. He is a wonderful orator and I never heard such a speech. He held us all spellbound. In the evening I took the American trade editors to dinner at the "Savoy" and then on afterwards to the American Officers' Club to hear Sir Eric Geddes talk about the Navy. . . .

Mr. Taft has accepted the American Presidency of the E.-S.U. and it is going very strong.

Sunday, 8 December, 1918.

On Thursday evening the E.-S.U. entertained Mr. James M. Beck of New York to dinner and it was a very successful evening and he made a great speech. I took the chair and my remarks went off well and the audience was appreciative. I had Beck on my right and Skinner the American Consul-General on my left. Lord Bryce supported the toast. . . .

My official future with the Foreign Office is still rather nebulous but I think I shall stick on for a month or two anyhow and see what happens. . . .

John Dillon openly advocates an Irish Republic and I imagine Sinn Fein will win 60 seats, so that you will be having an exciting time. Till the Irish question is settled there will never be a complete understanding between America and ourselves, though how it is to be accomplished beats me.

Sunday, 15 December, 1918.

The religious editors returned from France on Wednesday and I arranged a Ministerial lunch in their honour on Thursday, which John Buchan and Sir Henry Newbolt attended. They had much enjoyed their time in France and go back to America on Saturday. On Thursday Francis Yeats-Brown came to breakfast. He arrived in London from Constantinople the previous day. I thought him looking very well and not nearly as starved as I had expected.

*(Letters to Parents.)*

The chiefs of the allied and associated powers made their preparations for the Paris Conference, where a just peace was to be drawn up. Great war-leaders came to and fro. Early in December Londoners were enabled to acclaim the two Frenchmen primarily responsible for the combined victory. I watched Marshal Foch and Clemenceau drive down St. James's Street. Anticipation was in the atmosphere. Professors and pundits with schemes of European reconstruction prepared their dossiers. Wire-pullers in Whitehall who considered no lasting treaty could be drawn up without their help sought inclusion in the new "British army of occupation" destined for Paris. Only on this occasion the combatants—serious Foreign Office clerks and experts and lady secretaries—were armed with nothing more alarming than files, folders and foolscap. And maps. Maps with blue lines showing the future demarcations of Europe accompanied every delegation. Statesmen and their underlings talked learnedly of Memel, Transylvania, Danzig and Fiume, as if they had been familiar with these European danger-spots all their lives. Diplomatic correspondents explained to ordinary mortals why the first essential to a lasting peace was to satisfy Italian, Roumanian, Jugo-Slav, Polish, Czechoslovak, Greek or Arab aspirations.

I was particularly interested in the Arab cause because I had heard at first hand of the vital part which the British-supported Arab Force had played in hastening the Turkish *débâcle*. Eddie Winterton,\* an Eton friend, told me he wanted me to meet T. E. Lawrence, the young archæologist who would "in future be regarded as one of the great figures of the war." He said he thought I could be helpful in introducing Lawrence to some of the powers in Fleet Street so that the British public should be correctly informed as to Arab hopes and of our promise to help forward the establishment of a great Arab State in the Middle-East—independent, but living on friendly terms with Great Britain.

\* Earl Winterton, M.P.

One day I returned late from lunch as I had been ordering new clothes at my tailor's after twenty months in khaki. In my outer office I saw an unassuming-looking young man, waiting to see me. He was shown in.

"I am the fellow Winterton asked you to see."

I did not then remember very much about Winterton's friend. Let me see, he was the young archæologist who was digging in the Middle-East and got mixed up with the Arabs? Oh, yes, I remembered now. He was the man about whom all sorts of rumours were floating round.

I looked at Lawrence. His eyes riveted my attention. They were the bluest I had ever seen. They seemed to be looking right through me to distant horizons. Despite his modest bearing, there was a dignity about Lawrence that compelled respect. He gave the impression that he would be equal to any emergency. I asked him to tell me why he cared so much about the proposed Arab State. It was a wonderful story he unfolded. He omitted all reference to the part he had played in the Arab Crusade. Only by degrees from brother officers, and above all from my friend Lowell Thomas, did I hear the fairy-like tale of the young Englishman, not yet out of his twenties, who had been the terror of Germans and Turks in Arabia and Syria, who had led hundreds of raids against them, and who possessed an uncanny power over the wild soldiers of the desert.

I saw Lawrence on many occasions during the post-war period, and I was able to introduce him to various newspaper friends. He wanted no publicity for himself, all he desired was that the Arab cause should be understood. Subsequent meetings only confirmed my first impressions. He was unlike any man I had ever met. I would never have dared to prophesy his future. Friends might implore him to place his great knowledge at the disposal of the Empire in its attempt to deal with eastern peoples, but they came up against a flint-like refusal. Great Britain had not carried out her pledges to the Arabs; he would

just withdraw from the arena. "T. E. Lawrence" was no more.

An impression of Lawrence given me by Lowell Thomas—who subsequently told the wonderful story of the Arabian campaign night after night at Covent Garden Opera House under the auspices of the English-Speaking Union and to huge audiences throughout the English-speaking world—is appended:

At this moment, somewhere in London, hiding from a host of feminine admirers, reporters, book publishers, autograph fiends and every species of hero-worshipper, is a young man whose name will go down in history beside those of Sir Francis Drake, Sir Walter Raleigh, Lord Clive, Charles Gordon, and all the other famous heroes of Great Britain's glorious past. His first line of defence against these would-be visitors is an Amazonian landlady who battles day and night to save her illustrious guest from his admirers. . . . The young man is at present flying from one part of London to another, dressed in mufti, with a hat three sizes too large pulled down over his eyes, trying to escape from the fairer sex.

His name is Thomas E. Lawrence.

The Germans and Turks were so impressed with Lawrence's achievements in Arabia that they expressed their admiration and appreciation by offering rewards amounting to over one hundred thousand pounds on his head—dead or alive. But the wild sons of Ishmael regarded their quiet, fair-haired leader as a sort of supernatural being who had been sent from heaven to deliver them from their oppressors, and they wouldn't have betrayed him for all the gold in the fabled mines of King Solomon.

During the winter of 1917-1918, shortly after Allenby captured the Holy City, I met Lawrence on one of the narrow streets near the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. He was dressed in the garb of an Oriental ruler, and at his belt he carried the curved gold sword worn only by the direct descendants of the prophet Mohammed. Previous to that day I had heard nothing but wild rumours about him, and as no one either in Egypt or Palestine seemed to have any definite knowledge regarding him, I suspected that he was merely a myth.

From what I saw of him in the few days he remained in Jerusalem I became convinced that he was one of the outstanding figures of the War, and a little later Allenby consented to my joining Lawrence and the Arab army.

From personal observation and from the lips of a group of

equally daring and adventurous British officers who were associated with him, I discovered that Lawrence had accomplished more toward unifying the peoples of Arabia than all of the sultans and emirs since the days of the Great Caliphs six hundred years ago.

His success was largely due to his genius for handling men, and his peculiar training, which made it possible for him to transform himself into an Arab.

Some years after the war, as I walked from the lift along the mosaic floor of the passage on the sixth floor at 87, Victoria Street to my flat one evening, I saw in the distance a small man in uniform. When I reached the door I wondered what a private in the Air Force wanted with me. The figure turned round and smiled, those blue eyes looked through me again.

"Hello, Lawrence!"

"No, Shaw please, Lawrence is dead."

Since then nothing that I ever heard about Lawrence astonished me. If he had retired to a mountain fastness in the Himalayas or to the Falkland Islands so as to get away from his fellows to do some creative thinking, I would not have been surprised.

I have enjoyed few conversations as much as talks with Lawrence about the "Brown Dominions"—his way of expressing Canadian self-government as applied to Asia. It was a subject to which I had devoted much thought, and his views on the right policy for the British Empire to pursue in India and elsewhere in dealing with "subject" peoples largely coincided with my own. If Lawrence's views had been listened to as regards Mesopotamia immediately after the Armistice, the British taxpayer would have been saved countless millions. I was convinced that he was right. Sooner or later the British Commonwealth would have to find a place for brown Dominions as partners.\*

\* In the summer of 1920 Lawrence wrote *inter alia* to *The Times*: "I shall be told that the idea of brown Dominions in the British Empire is grotesque. Yet the Montagu scheme and the Milner scheme are approaches to it, and the only alternative seems to be conquest, which the ordinary Englishman does not want and cannot afford."

My only grudge against T. E. Shaw was his dislike of replying to letters, a habit he shared with other great men. Was it not Disraeli who said that if you leave letters unanswered long enough they answer themselves in due course? It was no new trait in his character, as this typical missive will show:

Barton St.,

19.2.19.

Dear Wrench,

Even the pathos of R.S.V.P. as the postscript in your letter of a fortnight ago was not strong enough to move me readily. The fact is, I am grown neglectful of my duty to the other people in the world, and my correspondence lies about like hayseed. Every reply is late and every reply apologetic. I'm getting mock-blunt-graceful at the business.

Will you lunch with me any day next week except Saturday? Or any day this week, if there is any left of it? I'd call at your office, and we would look for some place near by. . . .

Yours sincerely,

T. E. LAWRENCE.

T. E. Shaw was a much misunderstood man. The unseeing think that his dislike of publicity was a pose. Nothing could be further from the truth. He was among those leaders who have embarked upon some great enterprise in life with high hopes and enthusiasm. During the stirring years of their crusade they live from day to day. The mere task of carrying through their endeavour monopolises their thoughts. There is little time for introspection. When the task is accomplished there is inevitable reaction. The joy of achievement is unsatisfying. The bread has turned to stone. Was the effort worth while?

During the campaign in Arabia Lawrence was absorbed in his job. To outwit the moves of the German-Turkish staff was a task that admitted of little time for introspection. To help the ancient Arab race to throw off their shackles was a great cause. Lawrence took satisfaction in the thought that he had played a vital part in re-drawing the map in the Middle-East—in eliminating the Turk.

When the scene changed from the sun-scorched wastes of Northern Arabia to the *couloirs* of Paris hotels and the anterooms of conference-chambers, Lawrence tried to adapt himself to his new environment. He knew that he could still play a useful part in helping his Arab friends to realise their aspirations. The British Government had given their word, and although there were strong influences at work seeking to frustrate Arab hopes Lawrence still hoped to achieve success. Then followed disillusionment. Politicians and promises did not coalesce. In the lobbies of the Peace Conference Lawrence had nostalgia for the desert, for the company of men whose word was their bond. There was anguish in his soul. The pledges he had given were not to be redeemed. How could he face his Arab friends in future? He determined to get away from his past. Once he had put on paper the record of the campaign, Lawrence would cease to exist as truly as if he had been killed by a Turkish bullet.

He was a philosopher. He appraised the trappings of worldly office at their right value. He was not prepared to sell his soul for a mess of pottage. He wanted none of the baubles of this world now that his dream was shattered. He determined to start life again at the age of thirty with a clean slate! There is no law against a man locking away his past in some secret place if he so desires. Why should the actor in a great epic be compelled to be at the mercy of social "lion hunters," of enterprising journalists, of autograph hunters? Why should he not work out his destiny on his own lines?

He wrote to me in March, 1935 :

Often I wish I had known at the beginning the weary lag that any sudden reputation brings. I should have refrained from doing even the little that I did ; and now I would be left alone and able to live as I choose. To have news value is to have a tin can tied to one's tail.

Let us hope that before his tragic death he found the peace and contentment for which he so sorely longed.





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# Chapter XXVII

PRESIDENT WILSON'S VISIT

DECEMBER 26-31, 1918

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## Chapter XXVII

### PRESIDENT WILSON'S VISIT

AFTER the strenuous autumn of 1918, with its endless functions in honour of the American journalists and the emotion of the first days of peace, culminating in the "Hang the Kaiser Election,"\* I went over to Ireland to see my family for the first time since my abortive attempt at Irish peace-making twenty months previously. I arrived in Ireland on 22 December, and the following day, on getting back from Dublin, where I had been interviewing some of the Sinn Fein leaders, I received an urgent message from George Mair† asking me to return to London at once to look after the large party of American journalists who were coming over to England with President Wilson. I therefore returned by the mail-boat on Christmas evening. The next six days, till the President left, were as busy as any spent at the Ministry of Information during the war. From morning to night I lived in a whirl of speech-making and glad-handshaking. It was one of the most stimulating episodes in my life. In my wildest dreams I had never expected to live to see the ruler of the British Commonwealth talking to and laughing with the President of the United States of America in the heart of London, within a few yards of me, and to be myself in charge of an important job connected with the visit.

When President Wilson arrived in London I was standing in the reserved enclosure just behind the spot where the King greeted his distinguished guest at Charing

\* I have always thought that Mr. Lloyd George should have refused to be stampeded into this jingo election by Northcliffe. His position was so strong in the country that he would have won apart from Northcliffe.

† Assistant Secretary, Ministry of Information, and subsequently Director of Press Section British Peace Delegation, Paris, 1919. Died 1926.

Cross railway station. I append my account of the meeting written at the time :

St Stephen's Day, 26 December, 1918, will long be remembered as one of the landmarks in the history of the English-speaking world. It was an historic moment when President Wilson, the successor of George Washington, stepped on to the platform of Charing Cross railway station to be greeted by His Majesty King George V, the lineal descendant of George III. As I watched the two men shake hands and noted the warmth with which they greeted each other, I felt that history was being made before my eyes.

Two minutes later the King introduced Mr. Lloyd George to the President, and all eyes were focussed on the two leaders of the English-speaking Democracies. . . . All shades of political opinion on this side of the Atlantic were determined that the official head of the American Republic should receive such a welcome as was never before extended to any visitor to these shores. The cordiality and warmth of London's welcome to Mr. Wilson will long be remembered by those who saw it.

But the outstanding impression in my mind is the picture of that tall, smiling man talking animatedly to the little Welshman on the railway platform. Those two men, the leaders of the English-speaking world, are between them very largely moulding the destinies of mankind at the Peace Conference. It is gratifying to know from their lips how identical are the aims of our two peoples and how close is the spirit of co-operation which exists between us. How fervently can we all re-echo the prayer of the King in his speech of welcome that the same brotherly spirit which has animated Great Britain and America in the war may inspire and guide their united efforts to secure for the world "an ordered freedom and an enduring peace."\*

The American journalists—the leading newspaper reporters in the United States, and not to be confused with the parties of editors whom we had been welcoming at the Ministry of Information—expected hectic days and they were not disappointed. When they managed to write their cables to their papers I do not know! Every moment of their time was filled up. I had to pilot them through the expectant crowds, waiting to welcome the President, in a procession of cars to Buckingham Palace,

\* *Landmark*, February, 1919.







*Photo. Central Press Photos.*

His Majesty The King with President Wilson,  
photographed in London, December, 1918.

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as the King expressed a wish to meet the American journalists at the outset of the visit. I drove with the first car. My duty was to stand near Their Majesties in the large reception room at Buckingham Palace and to introduce each individual, announcing in a clear voice the name of the paper with which he was connected. The gracious and unaffected manner in which the King received them made a deep impression on the visitors.

All who were looking for the establishment of a sane and stable world after the peace conference regarded Mr. Wilson very much as a deliverer of mankind. He represented to us Europeans the mouthpiece of the great American nation, that had emerged from the war practically unscathed and in a position of supreme economic strength. Early in 1919 I wrote :

. . . He is speaking for the people of America—just the ordinary people like you and me. Indeed Mr. Wilson has been at some pains to explain that when he refers to the proceedings in Paris he alludes to the *Nations* of the world as opposed to the Governments of the world—a vastly different thing. It is from the people he derives his authority and it is to the people he is rendering an account of his stewardship. "When I sample myself," says the President, "I think I find that I am a typical American, and if I sample deep enough, and get down to what probably is the true stuff of the man, then I have hope that it is part of the stuff that is like the other fellows at home. And, therefore, probing deep in my heart and trying to see things that are right, without regard to the things that may be debated as expedient, I feel that I am interpreting the purpose and the thought of America." . . .

The main thesis of Mr. Wilson's appeal was that "the arrangements of the present peace cannot stand for a generation unless they are guaranteed by the united forces of the civilised world." And it is for this reason above all others that he pleads with his fellow-citizens to give him the mandate of America at the Peace Conference. . . . Mr. Wilson is confident that he has interpreted the will of the United States : "But I talk," he said, "as if there were any question. I have no more doubt of the verdict of America on this matter than I have doubt of the blood that is in me."\*

When Mr. Wilson spoke like this we were certain he

\* *Landmark*, April 1919.



was on firm ground. The thought that the American people would repudiate their spokesman was to us unthinkable in 1919. In May, after a visit to Paris, I wrote :

French fears have been met by the pledge of President Wilson and Mr. Lloyd George on behalf of our two peoples, to come to the rescue of France in the event of an unprovoked attack by Germany. This alliance, guarantee—call it what you will—requires of course the endorsement of the Senate and of our own Houses of Parliament ; but it is hardly conceivable that either of the English-speaking peoples will withhold their approval.\*

It was a red-letter day when I had the privilege, as Chairman of the English-Speaking Union, of introducing a small deputation of the Central Committee to the President at the American Embassy at Grosvenor Gardens.† The President had with him Mr. John W. Davis, Dr. Page's successor as Ambassador at the Court of St. James's, and since then dates a warm friendship. Mr. Davis is to-day the president of the English-Speaking Union of the United States. In the course of my remarks, I said :

The English-Speaking Union, which has headquarters in Philadelphia and London, has been founded in no narrow attitude of race-pride, in no spirit of hostility to any people. It does not aim at formal alliances, nor has it anything to say to the relationships of Governments. It is simply a movement to draw together in the bonds of comradeship the English-speaking peoples of the world. We realise that an effective League of Nations must have its foundations securely laid, and these foundations must be the heartiest co-operation and the most complete understanding, the most intimate knowledge of one another, between the English-speaking democracies.‡

“ The President listened to the address with keen interest and evident pleasure.”§ We then had a friendly and

\* *Landmark*, 1919, Vol. I, p. 322.

† The deputation consisted of four members : myself as Chairman, Mr. Francis E. Powell, Vice-Chairman, Sir Campbell Stuart and Mr. F. R. Jones.

‡ From the account in *The Times*, 30 December, 1918.

§ *Ibid.*

informal talk with him and Mr. Davis. Mr. Wilson wished us success in our efforts, and with a twinkle in his eye concluded by saying, "Just because we do speak the same language and can read each other's papers and what is said about us on the opposite side of the Atlantic, we should be very careful what we say about one another!"

We looked forward to the future with confidence. Alas, we did not reckon with the inevitable reaction in human affairs after moments of high endeavour. A dramatic event was the unveiling in the dining-room of No. 10 Downing Street by the President of the portrait of George Washington presented to the British Government by Lord and Lady Albemarle—probably in the room in which the treaty agreeing to the independence of the United States was acquiesced in by the British Government. Perhaps the greatest moment of the visit from my standpoint was when I drank to the toast of "The King and the President of the United States, who for the first time in history are on the same continent" at the farewell dinner to the American editors.

Extracts from my letters written at this period are appended :

Sunday, 5 January, 1919.

I have had two very friendly interviews with the Chief and he has given me a very nice tie pin with diamonds and three rubies for Xmas. His throat is rather bad so he has been ordered to spend the next ten weeks in the South of France. While he is away he wants me to organise a Fund to commemorate the work of the Dover Patrol and the co-operation existing during the war between the British, American and French Naval forces; it is rather a bother having anything else to do, but as he wants me to do it I can't very well refuse.

On Monday evening we gave a farewell dinner to the American journalists with the President. Mr. H. A. L. Fisher, the Minister of Education, was in the chair, and Reading and Bryce both spoke and it went off very well. On Wednesday I lunched with my friend Doubleday of New York—Page's partner. He runs the *World's Work* and other papers in America. The following day I lunched with the secretary of the Atlantic Union and I am glad to say our amalgamation has taken place. That society was started

## STRUGGLE

in 1897 by Sir Walter Besant. It was founded when the German fleet attempted to seize Manila during the Spanish-American war. The British came to the assistance of the Americans and the Germans then withdrew.

Sunday, 4 January, 1919.

The next month is rather a critical one for the E.-S.U. till we see how our membership renewals are coming in. Our lease is just awaiting signature so we should soon be able to start about making arrangements for our new premises in Trafalgar Square.\*

Sunday, 12 January, 1919.

I have had a very full week and on Tuesday went to see the new American Ambassador, whom I like greatly; I am sure he will do well. He has got a very nice manner and is very approachable. On Monday I lunched with Sir Arthur Stanley, the Chairman of the Red Cross. They are thinking of publishing a magazine and want me to see to it for them. It is a job I would quite like and is very much on my own lines.

Sunday, 19 January, 1919.

I spent my first full week at the Overseas Club and you can't imagine what it feels like to be an absolutely free agent. I was officially discharged from the Army on Tuesday and am allowed to retain the rank of Major, and my arrangement with the Ministry of Information has also come to an end, so that for the next few months I shall be able to devote myself entirely to my own work. I also have no longer any official connection with the *Daily Mail*, which gives me a very nice independent feel.

Sunday, 26 January, 1919.

On Tuesday I went to see the Lord Mayor at the Mansion House about a scheme for presenting an address of farewell to the American troops in the United Kingdom.

Sunday, 2 February, 1919.

I am usually in bed by 9.30 and asleep by 9.45. I always wake up at 5.0 and usually start my work then. This gives me two quiet hours before I get up.

I went to an Australian and New Zealand lunch on Monday to hear Conan Doyle speak and sat just opposite him. He is very full of spiritualism and had some "spirit" photos in his pocket. Running this Dover Patrol Fund has been rather a nuisance and has given me a lot of work, especially as it has not been doing very

\* The English-Speaking Union actually moved to Trafalgar Square early in 1920.

well, and I have been getting wires from the Chief. I really have not the time or inclination to do outside work and I only did it because the Chief asked me and I did not see how I could well refuse. . . .

I can't tell you what it means to me to be my own master and not beholden to anyone and to feel that the Chief and Carmelite House have no power over me!

Sunday, 9 February, 1919.

On Tuesday I went out to Hendon to assist at the aeroplane presentation ceremony when we\* gave 16 machines to the Canadian Government. You probably saw the photo in the *Daily Mirror*. I drove back with Lord Londonderry who was very friendly and said nice things about you. I liked him very much.

On Wednesday Mr. Edward Harding, the man who organised British Day in New York, and his wife arrived and the Committee of the E.-S.U. gave them a lunch and the following day I got Cecil Harmsworth, who is Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs, to entertain Harding to lunch and despite the lack of waiters everything went off very well and he was much pleased.

Sunday, 16 February, 1919.

On Wednesday the E.-S.U. had its amalgamation lunch with the Atlantic Union. We had 300 people present and Bryce in the chair, the only trouble was one could not hear him. I sat between Professor Gilbert Murray and Colonel Arthur Murray, Elibank's brother. I spoke for about seven minutes but they all said I was the one person they could hear and I think I stirred things up a bit. In the evening I dined with Campbell Stuart, who is just back from Paris and told me all the Peace Conference talk.

(*Letters to Parents.*)

In February, 1919, Geoffrey Dawson resigned the editorship of *The Times*. I had learnt the news of the impending change from Northcliffe's lips. He rang me up one day and said, "I am going to make Wickham Steed the new editor of *The Times*," and asked me what I thought of the appointment.† In my view Wickham Steed, who is a brilliant linguist, was probably the best-informed foreign correspondent in Europe and as foreign editor

\* The Overseas Club and the Patriotic League.

† Unfortunately I cannot recall the exact date of this conversation. As far as I recollect Northcliffe was at Avignon in the south of France at the actual moment of the appointment.

was without rival, but he had lived so much abroad that he did not possess the intimate touch with English political, university and public life essential to the editorship of *The Times*.

I was very sorry when Dawson resigned because I regarded him as the ideal editor for Printing House Square. He was a typical Englishman, the best product of Eton and Oxford, and his long residence in South Africa had knocked off the insularity of the untravelled Englishman. During the early years of their association Northcliffe and Dawson made an excellent combination. Dawson was progressive and yet not too progressive. He did not rush to extremes. He had balance and poise. He could act as a brake on his chief. He was entirely without personal ambition. The best traditions of *The Times* were safe in his hands. I well remember my first meeting with Dawson. It was at a week-end party at Northcliffe's in 1910. I was interested in meeting the South African correspondent of *The Times*—"one of Milner's young men." I watched him and Northcliffe walking up and down the huge lawn by the cedar tree at Sutton Place. On the Sunday evening Northcliffe said to me, "Evelyn, you have seen me talking to the future editor of *The Times* to-day." Northcliffe had been on the look-out for the ideal young man with good judgment and the right social position to succeed Buckle when the moment came to make a change. Northcliffe then knew Dawson but slightly. But he showed one of those flashes of intuitive genius which he sometimes displayed in selecting the right man for the right job on but slight acquaintance.

No doubt Geoffrey Dawson will tell the story of his years with Northcliffe some day. It was no secret that he found his position increasingly difficult towards the end of the war. In the first years Northcliffe left the editor of *The Times* comparative liberty of action, realising his own limitations. But as the war advanced Northcliffe lost his sense of proportion. Just as in the political field

he saw himself as a supreme dictator of the Peace terms, or at least sharing the honours with Mr. Lloyd George, so at *The Times* he grew more and more assertive. The relations between proprietor and editor became strained. Northcliffe constantly interfered in the conduct of the paper. He wanted *The Times* to follow the *Daily Mail's* lead. When he decided to part company with Dawson he suggested that the latter should resign on grounds of ill-health. But Dawson is not a Yorkshireman for nothing. When the situation became intolerable he resigned, but not for reasons of health.

As soon as the news was published I wrote a line to Dawson expressing my deep regret. I received this letter in reply :

2, Smith Square,  
Westminster, S.W.1.

26 February, 1919.

My dear Evelyn,

Thank you so much for your kind letter. I will tell you more about this change one of these days. Very likely I managed things badly, but there came a point at which no other course seemed decently possible.

Yours sincerely,  
GEOFFREY DAWSON.

It was a great day for British journalism when John Astor acquired *The Times* on Northcliffe's death and offered the editorship to Geoffrey Dawson.

Sunday, 23 February, 1919.

The E.-S.U.'s Washington Birthday Dinner last night was a great success. We had a very good attendance and Winston took the chair and made the speech of the evening. Everyone enjoyed it very much and came up and congratulated me. The Press was there in full force. Altogether the E.-S.U. is going very strong. . . .

On Tuesday I went up to address the American Y.M.C.A. workers. . . .

On Friday Oliver Locker-Lampson gave a lecture at the O.-S.C. about his experiences in Russia with his armoured cars and it was most interesting. He gave one extraordinary idea of the

absolute rout which took place among the Russians on the eastern front before they dropped out of the war.

Sunday, 2 March, 1919.

I had a nice message from the Chief thanking me for running the Dover Patrol Memorial Fund\* for him. I think they will have £30,000 this week and I am glad to say that after 15 March I shall not have to bother any more about it. Just when I was very busy with my own affairs it was a great drag having to write it up every day in the *Daily Mail*.

On Wednesday I got the Government to give a lunch in honour of my American friend Doubleday. We are thinking of trying to get Taft to come over here, though whether he will I don't know.

Sunday, 9 March, 1919.

In America there is a great annual series of conferences in the summer throughout the country, called the Chataqua Conferences. They get European lecturers over to talk to big meetings. A deputation came to ask me to go, all expenses paid and a 2 months' tour lecturing in a different place each night! I know what travelling in July and August in the hot weather is and I don't relish the prospect, so I shan't accept. Anyhow it was gratifying.

Sunday, 16 March, 1919

I so utterly agree with what you, Mother, say about America going "dry." Every night I watch the drunken people reeling out of the Public House opposite and all the Government keeps doing is to remove restrictions. I am afraid we are a long way behind America in this matter. But we are a slow people to move. Anyhow, I hope to live to see this country go "dry" as well.† . . . The E.-S.U. is going to have a Memorial Service at Westminster Abbey on 4 April to the memory of all the American soldiers and sailors who have fallen in the war. Dr. Cobb and I went round on Friday to arrange details with the Dean.

Sunday, 23 March, 1919

On Wednesday Sir Arthur Stanley of the British Red Cross asked me to come and see him with reference to helping them to make known their future plans. . . .

Norman Angell dined with me on Friday and I was so glad to see him again after three years. He has been in America all this time and is now helping to start the new Labour paper the *Daily*

\* Obelisks were erected at St. Margaret's Bay, Kent, Cap Gris Nez, France, and New York in memory of British, French and American naval co-operation.

† For several years I was a firm believer in Prohibition. See pages 437-443.

*Herald.* He was full of information and I greatly enjoyed meeting him again. . . .

Sunday 30 March 1919.

On Monday I lunched with Sir Arthur Stanley at St. Thomas's Hospital, of which he is treasurer, to discuss his Red Cross scheme. He has asked me to go down this week to Cannes, in an honorary capacity but with my hotel expenses paid, to the Conference of the Red Cross Societies. He wants me to act as liaison officer and send daily cables to *The Times* and *Daily Mail*, which Northcliffe has arranged to put in. . . .

On Wednesday we had our first O.-S.C. monthly lunch, when we entertained Sir John Monash. . . .

Mrs. Waldorf Astor\* asked me to go round to see her on Friday night and we are working out a scheme to entertain these American soldier students who are over here. So altogether it has been a full week.

Even if the Ministry of Information was closed I tried as far as finances would permit to carry on its functions through my two organisations—in the case of the Empire through the Overseas League and in the case of the United States through the English-Speaking Union.

My major activities during these first months of peace, while there were still large numbers of American troops in Europe, were the organising of a Memorial Service at Westminster Abbey to the American dead in the war, by permission of the Dean and Chapter, and the preparation of an address of farewell to the American troops signed by the Lord Mayor of London and the Mayors and Provosts of the chief cities where American troops had been quartered during the war.† Two months after the presentation I received this letter from General Pershing :

My dear Mr. Wrench,

I have examined with interest the illuminated address to the people of the United States of America which was prepared by the English-Speaking Union and which you forwarded to me in your letter of 15 December. It is, indeed, a beautiful and interesting document and one which will make all Americans

\* Lady Astor.

† The wording and a list of the signatories appear on page 492 of the Appendix.



proud of their British cousins. To my mind you are accomplishing as important a piece of work for progress and the world's peace as any one movement to-day. I am firmly convinced that if the English-speaking peoples of the world get to fully understand each other and gain that mutual respect and cordial relations which come with full understanding the future peace of the world is assured as it can be in no other way.

Yours very sincerely

JOHN J. PERSHING.

I helped Dr. Geikie Cobb, of the Church of St. Ethelburga the Virgin in Bishopsgate Street, to collect funds to erect a window to the memory of Henry Hudson the navigator in this church, his son and ten other members of his crew on the 19 April, 1607, "did communicate with the rest of the parishioners, these persons, seamen, purposing to go to sea four days after, for to discover a passage by the North Pole to Japan and China." I also proposed, in October, 1918, that a suitable memorial "to the great work of Mr. Page should take the form of a centre where the visitor from across the Atlantic would be made to feel at home," an idea that was partially realised when the English-Speaking Union moved to Trafalgar Square in 1920, and finally materialised when we acquired Dartmouth House in 1927.

To me the year 1919 will always be the year in which we took leave of General Pershing, Admiral Sims and the armed forces of the United States and mutually resolved to co-operate henceforth together for the welfare of mankind. Although we were saying good-bye to the American Forces, I was convinced that sooner or later there would be the closest co-operation between the American and British Navies.

It was a sorrow to me that owing to the Cannes Red Cross Conference I could not be present in Westminster Abbey the shrine of the English-speaking race at the great final tribute to the United States dead. It was a moving occasion, and the Dean of Westminster summed up the hopes and feelings of all in the Abbey: "Their deaths

have sealed the unwritten but inviolable covenant of our common brotherhood. Their deaths have laid the enduring foundations of the world's hope for future peace."

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## Chapter XXVIII

“CONFERENCING” AT CANNES

APRIL, 1919

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### “CONFERENCING” AT CANNES

WHEN Sir Arthur Stanley, Chairman of the British Red Cross asked me to attend the Conference of Allied Red Cross Societies at Cannes and to take charge of the publicity from the British standpoint I readily accepted. After the long break without a proper holiday and the continuous work at high pressure I was getting stale both physically and mentally. I badly needed the tonic of changed environment. My expenses would be paid—no small consideration in those days—and the job would be interesting and would enable me to witness at close quarters British-American co-operation for the benefit of humanity. During the war I had met Arthur Stanley on various occasions in connection with my overseas Red Cross work and I had a great admiration for him. He had risen triumphantly over ill-health and devoted his life to public service. His work had latterly brought him in close touch with the American Red Cross organisation and we shared an enthusiasm for the cause of English-speaking co-operation.

The initiative in calling the conference of the Red Cross Societies in allied countries was taken by Mr. Henry P. Davison, a partner in the firm of J. P. Morgan & Co. of New York, and the conception of the scheme was primarily American. In the first flush of victory the United States was playing the rôle of Good Samaritan to Europe. American money was being poured into the task of rehabilitation and reconstruction of the stricken continent. Even if America declined the mandate for Armenia and subsequently refused to join the League of Nations she poured forth material aid in response to the heart-breaking appeals of Central and Eastern Europe. As late as the spring of 1920 she was still feeding two and

a half million children between the Baltic and the Black Sea. Europe, in criticising America's isolationist policy, is apt to forget American charity after the war.

The printed matter of the Cannes Conference thus proclaimed its purpose: "To formulate and to propose to the Red Cross Societies of the world an extended programme of Red Cross activities in the interests of humanity." The leaders of the Red Cross in Great Britain and the United States were anxious that the combined societies should in peace time become a great movement for promoting the health of the people of the world, for fighting tuberculosis, venereal disease, typhus (then raging in Russia), and for carrying on a world-wide infant welfare campaign. What humanity needed, as one speaker put it, was a "Health Conscience." The intention was ultimately to include the Red Cross Societies of the ex-enemy countries in the work; but for the moment the conference was composed of representatives from the United States, the British Empire, France, Italy and Japan. Before leaving London, Arthur Stanley introduced me to my American colleague at the Conference—Ivy Lee, who was ultimately responsible for telling the American public of the Red Cross activities.

My first journey to Paris in a world of peace was almost a novel sensation. I had crossed the Channel so frequently during the war years that I could hardly remember pre-war conditions. My mind recalled patrolling destroyers and mine-sweepers, endless passport formalities, being searched for letters, and above all fellow passengers in khaki. My chief memory was of those thousands on the way back from "Blighty". I wondered how many of my war-time fellow-passengers had never returned.

The war was already becoming history, so rapidly does man adjust himself to changed conditions; but floating mines were still being picked up in the Channel, a fact that recalled how recent was Armageddon. Boulogne was still a British town and every second person was in khaki. The chief change was that there was no longer a

constant stream of wounded coming down from the front, nor Red Cross trains in the sidings. The Paris express was almost entirely composed of German rolling stock. Everywhere in France in the spring of 1919 German railway carriages and goods wagons were to be seen—part of the equipment Germany had been forced to surrender at Abbeville, Amiens and elsewhere by Marshal Foch’s armistice terms. All the way to Paris German prisoners were engaged in constructional work, repairing the ravages of war. From the windows of the corridor of the packed Paris train Britons, Americans and French looked out at the long line of trenches and dug-outs in the chalky hills near Montdidier. Officers still in uniform were pointing out ruined houses, farms and shell craters, every outline of which was stamped on their memory. I wrote during my visit :

. . . On both sides of the track the ruined and shattered houses and the shell-holes bear witness to the German onslaught which was being stemmed in those fateful days this time last year. I looked out of the railway carriage and reflected on the extraordinary events of the past year. A French ploughman without one arm was skilfully driving his horses and managing his plough, hard at work preparing the soil for the summer crop. Almost before one’s eyes traces of the smaller shell-holes were being obliterated.

Once one arrives in Paris, Tommy Atkins no longer holds sway, and the “doughboy” takes his place. Indeed in Paris I saw more “doughboys” than *poilus* ! It is no exaggeration to say that the American army is in complete possession of central and southern France, and although the “doughboy” is longing to get “back home” he is putting up with his present situation with complete good humour.

Hotel des Deux Mondes,  
Avenue de l’Opéra, Paris.

2 April, 1919.

We arrived at Paris punctually ; there was a Red Cross man in a motor-car waiting for me. The chief thing that struck me about the Boulevards this visit was the number of American officers walking about with Parisiennes ! In the afternoon I went to see George Mair at the British Mission. They will arrange

for my visit to the "Front" and anything I want to see. I lunched with my American Red Cross friends. (*Letter.*)

Paris in the spring of 1919 was an American town. There seemed at least ten Americans to every Englishman and I wondered how the French liked the peaceful occupation of their capital by Anglo-Saxondom, though no doubt it was good for business! During my visit I heard the latest Peace Conference gossip from friends attached to the British Delegation, among them George Mair and Sir George Riddell.\* Apparently things were by no means plain sailing and the "Big Four" were being sharply criticised for delays and dilly-dallying. Clemenceau knew what he wanted and was determined to get it, while Lloyd George and Wilson had had several "scraps"—in fact Wilson, whom his enemies accused of having the mentality of a small-town, unyielding Methodist Minister, "was being difficult." I sympathised with Wilson, for reports were reaching me from American friends that opposition to his proposals was growing in the United States. As for Signor Orlando, I heard his name but rarely, although I was told Italy was disgruntled and was not satisfied with her slice of the melon.

Close at hand the peace delegates did not seem such far-sighted statesmen as they had from London. In some ways I was glad that I had not applied for a post in Paris during the Conference. A close-up of the negotiations would have been disillusioning. All this manoeuvring for position and wire-pulling behind the scenes was distasteful if inevitable. In January I had written thus of the Peace Conference :

The Peace Conference delegates have assembled and the eyes of humanity are turned to Paris. Never have human beings been confronted with such problems as will be discussed in Paris during the next few months. Never was there greater need for long views, for strong action based on the highest ideals, and for a determination to adopt no selfish attitude, to indulge in no petty spirit of revenge if a lasting peace is to be restored to the world. . . . All nations

\* Lord Riddell. Died 5 December, 1934.

must rise to the great occasion. Let us take to heart the wise reply Lord Castlereagh made to Lord Liverpool a hundred years ago. “It is not our business,” the great statesman said, “to collect trophies, but to try if we can bring back the world to peaceful habits.”\*

A month later, just before my Paris visit, I wrote :

It would be futile to deny that elements of friction have not been wanting and that the reactionary forces, whose outlook has not changed materially from that of our grandfathers at the Congress of Vienna, have done their best to uphold the traditions of old-time diplomacy. When one considers the difficulties of establishing a League of Nations, the only cause for wonder must surely be that such splendid headway has been made. The League of Nations no longer belongs to the realm of ideas. The Peace Conference at Paris is becoming more and more an international tribunal of World-powers, concerning which statesmen have dreamed dreams since the time of Henry of Navarre and William Penn.†

But during my visit to France in April I had other things to think of and I soon was plunged into the interesting work of the Red Cross Conference at Cannes. From the Riviera I wrote :

Three days before I left London we experienced the heaviest snowfall of the winter, and I woke up to find five or six inches of snow in Victoria Street. Five days later I looked out of my wagon-lit window to a world bathed in sunshine. Spring was in possession of this fair land with its olive trees and cypresses and Italian-looking towns clustering on the hillsides.

At every wayside station you see the “doughboy” reading *Stars and Stripes*, or the American edition of the *Paris Daily Mail*. The Riviera has become an American playground, and Cannes, Nice and Monte Carlo are towns of khaki—and the khaki is that of the “doughboy,” for the *Côte d’Azur* has been made a leave-centre by the American army authorities.

I could not help wishing that it had been possible to arrange for more of the American army to have had leave in Great Britain during the War, so that the American soldier might have had a better chance of getting to know his British cousin.‡

From the moment of my arrival at Cannes on 3 April

\* *Overseas*, February, 1919, page 28.

† *Overseas*, March, 1919, page 32.

‡ *The Landmark*, May, 1919.



I was suddenly immersed in the daily task of sending long cables to *The Times* and the *Daily Mail*. This was the first and only occasion on which I have acted as a special correspondent for *The Times*.

The following are extracts from letters written during my stay in the South of France :

3 April. In train, stopping at Toulon. The sun is shining and there is a feeling of spring in the air. We are just approaching the Mediterranean, masses of fruit trees are in blossom and the hillsides are carpeted with wild flowers.

Later, *Carlton Hotel, Cannes*. This is a huge hotel on the promenade and I have a lovely room and my own bathroom and I have large French windows looking out to sea and a nice writing table by the window. This is my first experience of an International Conference. It is really rather fun.

4 April. My window is wide open and the sea is swishing all the time and there is such a view of the bay ! I worked till 7.30 then dined with my American friends. Ivy Lee has two rooms adjoining mine and wants me to have breakfast with him every morning.

I have been on the go all day. From 10 till lunch time I was in the Conference room. This means much harder work than I realised. I lunched with two Americans and Truby King. After lunch till 4.15 I was writing out my copy for my cable about the Red Cross, then I went for a walk. The Conference is very interesting, but after all the emotions of the last few years I don't feel much energy left to throw myself into a new thing.

*Carlton Hotel, Cannes, 5 April*. Dined with my friend Hereford, who is in charge of publicity for the American Red Cross under Ivy Lee. I always breakfast with the latter, we usually have two eggs and a good helping of cherry jam ! There are certainly no war-time restrictions here. I was at the Conference from 10 till lunch-time and it was a very interesting day and I felt more at home and I was pleased as I had wired to Northcliffe asking for *The Times* and the *Daily Mail* to devote more space and he wired back nicely saying he would see to it. I showed the wire to Henry P. Davison, head of the American Red Cross, and he was delighted. Lunched with Truby King who made a great speech this morning. From 2 to 5 I was writing out my telegrams, about twelve pages of foolscap for *The Times*, *Daily Mail* and Reuter's. As it was on Infant Welfare, I got it all carefully

corrected by Truby King. I have been much happier in my work to-day and although it is strenuous I don't mind as long as it brings results. Dined at a table with six of the professors and they were very friendly.

6 *April*. It was a beautiful day with cloudless blue sky and not too hot. The whole party of us, about fifty, went out in twenty motors at 9.30 as guests of Henry P. Davison. I was in the car with Truby King and Hereford and an Englishman called Harrison who is a great authority on venereal disease. We went along the coast through Nice to Monte Carlo where we lunched at the Hotel de Paris.

In the distance snow-clad Alps and fruit trees looking lovely. After lunch to the Casino with the whole party where I saw Rothermere for two minutes; I lost three pounds which is not too serious! Then at 2.30 we set out on the return journey of eighty miles. It was rather dusty but I have just had a hot bath. From Monte Carlo we went to Mentone, past the hotel where I stayed in 1911, and then up by the mountain road to Sospel. When we stopped I picked grape hyacinths by the roadside, primroses and mauve anemones.

7 *April*. The daily routine. Breakfast 8.30 sharp in Ivy Lee's room. 9-10 looking through papers and preparing for the day's work; 10 to 1 Conference room, 1 to 2 lunch, 2 to 5.30 writing out cables. The Conference has been anything but a rest cure. To-day's discussion was very interesting. I found my shorthand, faulty though it is, very helpful for taking down the speeches. I sent a column-and-a-half to *The Times* in addition to half-a-column to the *Daily Mail*.

8 *April*. I dined last night with eight of the men at the Conference. They were all very friendly and only too ready to help and they know that the publicity the Conference gets in the British Press depends on me. Just when I was writing in bed this morning at 7.30 and I thought I was going to have forty undisturbed minutes, in came my friend Truby King. He is an extraordinary little person and amuses me greatly but I did not want to be disturbed then, but he is a real genius and I like him very much! He walked up and down the room talking infant welfare to me.

*Later*. I was hard at work from 9.30 till 1. The discussion to-day was Child Welfare. After lunch I got hold of a typist and was able to dictate my "copy" which made an enormous difference. Truby King is always coming into my room at all sorts of odd hours! It is Infant Welfare, morning, noon and night!

9 April. Last night I dined with eight of the Americans and enrolled six of them as members of the English-Speaking Union. My first three-quarters of a column report in *The Times* appeared in Monday's edition and the delegates were very pleased with it. This morning we discussed malaria and nursing. I have now got an excellent typist, it makes a great difference and as a result I get through a tremendous lot by 5 o'clock, when I go and have tea at Rumpelmeyer's and then for an hour's walk. I find it rather difficult to get exercise. I had a nice letter from the American authorities to-day saying if there was any part of the American front I wished to visit I should be able to do so.

Had a long talk with one of the chief delegates the other day about continence in men. His views are not as ideal as I should have expected and he does not think continence natural and talked about tom-cats! On the other hand two other men in the Conference think that the only way to fight Venereal Disease is to set up an altogether fresh standard for men.

As relaxation from the Conference I have been reading a book in French on Carlyle and Emerson's correspondence. (*Letters.*)

It was a curious situation suddenly finding myself living in a world of doctors—many of them men with an international reputation—and being treated by them almost as one of themselves. During my stay at Cannes every meal was taken with the medical delegates and after dinner in the friendly atmosphere of the lounge we discussed all manner of problems. In particular I recall one heated argument on the subject of continence in men in which I found myself crossing swords with a well-known doctor, who adopted the man-of-the-world attitude. "What could you expect of healthy men?" "Men weren't angels and provided they took precautions what did it matter?" "Repressed sex was a dangerous thing and men must have a regular outlet."

When I put my point of view I was happy to find my worldly-wise friend—who probably had only spoken as he had, to draw me out—was in the minority. The majority agreed that every means should be taken to explain to a young man that there are two sides to his nature—the spiritual and the physical. That his sexual longings were given him so that he could express perfect

love with the three strands of his being, spirit, mind and body. In the meantime the physical side of his nature would be clamorous. He must therefore take regular exercise and fill his mind with healthy interests. The age-long struggle for mastery between the forces of light and darkness is being fought out in him.

I found that many scientists and professors with a world reputation were idealists and agreed that in the new world to which we looked forward there would have to be new standards of morality; that prostitution, the bane of civilisation, would never be stopped till men learned to control themselves and realised that continence was not deleterious to health.

If ever a conference was dominated by one man it was this Conference. Henry P. Davison was the life and soul of the gathering. He made an admirable chairman and his practical idealism swept all before it. I wished that some of my left-wing friends who were always calling down curses on Wall Street could have seen this millionaire-banker, who started life as a school teacher, throw his great abilities into the task of forming a League of Red Cross Societies.\* Davison's conception had for its purpose “turning the light of science and the warmth of human sympathy into every corner of the world.” He was a great organiser and under his direction the membership of the American Red Cross grew from 486,000 to 22,000,000. He was also a firm believer in the mission of the English-speaking peoples to lead humanity towards a better world.

I was brought into intimate daily contact with Ivy Lee. We worked together: we played together. As we breakfasted each morning in his room we discussed the plans of the day. Like Northcliffe he understood to a supreme degree placing facts in a palatable form before the public. There was a strong streak of idealism in Ivy. I sometimes feared that in his exacting business it would become partially submerged. He had a lucid mind, an intellect of an excep-

\* Subsequently realised at Paris on 5 May, 1919.

tional order and a great capacity for summing up the pros and cons of a political situation. He was much interested in my experiences at the Ministry of Information. We discussed the most effective method of enlisting public support for worth-while causes.

Ivy Lee filled a unique position in the business life of the United States. He was termed by the outside world "Business publicity agent" or "Press agent" but there was really no satisfactory designation for his job. At a Congressional enquiry last year, in response to the question "What is the difference between the vocation you follow and that of the publicity agent?" Ivy Lee said, "I don't know, sir, I have never been able to find a satisfactory phrase to describe what I try to do." He once thus described his work for his clients: "Placing their affairs before the public in the most favourable light."

Ivy Lee was called "the man who made Rockefeller loved." Among his clients in recent years were said to be the Soviet and Nazi Governments, and he was adviser on public relations to the Pennsylvania Railroad, the American Red Cross, the Guggenheim interests and the International Sugar Council. When he died last autumn one of the leading American newspapers referred to Ivy Lee as

the man who stripped American press-agentry of the blatant vulgarity into which Barnum had plunged it. . . . The business of hired praise this man raised to a new level of subtlety and discretion. He proved that taste, the soft word and understatement, may be invaluable assets to a press-agent, at least on the higher levels.

The Conference gave me a new outlook on world affairs. It taught me how the march of human progress might be expedited by the co-operation of all nations. It brought home to me as never before that patriotism was not enough. The ultimate aim must be the welfare of mankind. It was a rare privilege day by day to rub shoulders with men who were fighting disease in the clinics of the world.

Among those whom I met and talked with were : Professor Roux, of the Pasteur Institute, and Sir Ronald Ross, who advocated the spreading of health knowledge by the Red Cross organisations throughout the globe ; Sir F. Truby King, who urged the need of interpreting health facts in a way that was interesting to the community as a whole ; Colonel Harrison (R.A.M.C.), who urged “improved environment and increased home comforts” as the best way of fighting venereal disease ; Sir Arthur Newsholme, who claimed that the child was not a national but an international possession, and pleaded for a world-wide child life-saving campaign ; Dr. William H. Welch of John Hopkins University, who proposed that the Red Cross Societies should undertake an active campaign against typhus, then raging in the countries round the Black Sea ; and, finally, Henry Morgenthau, former United States Ambassador to Turkey, who expressed the hope of all those present that the joint Red Cross campaign would do for the health of humanity what the League of Nations was doing for a better world.

9 April. The Conference has been considering the outbreak of typhus fever which has taken place in Poland and Russia and the idea is that it would be a good thing if they could help to fight it. Typhus is carried by lice and the best way to prevent its spreading is to spray the people with petrol. I dined at our round table and we had an interesting talk about international affairs. We are all going back to Paris on Monday.

Ivy Lee suggested our motoring to Monte Carlo and spending the night there as it will be our last chance. It was a gorgeous day and we went by the Upper Corniche road with wonderful views and there were many wild flowers. We lunched at the Hotel de Paris. I was rather amused watching a young married couple at the tables. They criticized each other's play : *he* wanted to come away, but *she* would not for a little time. In the meantime she won, so apparently she was justified ! There was a full column of my stuff in both Thursday and Friday's *Times* so Sir Arthur Stanley should be very pleased. (*Letter.*)

I wrote in *The Landmark* :

A visit to Monte Carlo after an absence of five years brought home the changed conditions in which we live. The glorious

sunshine, the blossom of the trees and the sparkling Mediterranean were unchanged, but the old habitués of "Monte" have, temporarily anyhow, given place to the "doughboy"—on the terrace, in the gardens, at the Café de Paris, in the shops, everywhere you find him. Inside the doors of the Casino alone he or any other officer or soldier may not enter. Here the motley crowds of gamblers of yore are still to be seen, the only difference being the absence of the large numbers of Teutonic and Russian visitors of previous days. But the American "doughboy" did not have things entirely to himself, for as I stood on the steps of the Hotel de Paris several cars full of British, Australian, New Zealand and Canadian soldiers drove up. Five years ago how few foresaw what has happened, and which of us could have imagined a Monte Carlo invaded by Anglo-Saxons in khaki from the far seas?

11 April. At 7 last night Ivy Lee took me to dine at the Sporting Club at Monte Carlo. He had a Rolls-Royce placed at our disposal by the American Red Cross and it only took us an hour and twenty minutes to go from Cannes to Monte. I quite enjoyed two hours of "life." I came out all square. We only got back to Cannes at 2 o'clock. It was a lovely night but the car went much faster than I like. Feeling rather sleepy this morning I thought I was going to have a nice quiet time when Truby King appeared on the scene at 7.30 and sat on my bed for three-quarters of an hour. He is a real oddity, but I *do* like him.

It is such a gorgeous day with a sparkling sea of wonderful vivid blue and green and an intoxicating feel in the air. I don't relish the thought of the Conference room all morning! One ought to be on a holiday and just going off in a little sailing-boat to the island. I am glad to say my cables have been going splendidly; had nearly a column in *The Times* and half-a-column in the *Daily Mail*. Everybody was pleased with the result and congratulated me. (*Letter.*)

Sunday, 13 April. It has been a very full week. I am glad that the conference is over as it was quite a strain. It sat all morning from 10 till 1 and I had to depend on my notes for the reports you saw in *The Times*. I found my shorthand coming back to me and I don't know what I would have done without it. The conferences on Malaria, Tuberculosis and Child Welfare were very interesting and so was watching all the various personalities.

Truby King compared very favourably with any of them and I should say he was one of the chief thinkers there. I thought Ronald Ross rather forbidding in his manner.

The weather has been perfectly wonderful, sparkling seas and blue skies and brilliant sunshine, practically the whole time. My only sorrow has been that I have been cooped up so much and

have only had an hour out of doors most days. To-morrow we all return to Paris where I hope to see Arthur Stanley and I am certainly going to have a few days at the front on my way back, the Americans, Australians, and Canadians have all invited me. Also, I hope to go down for a few days to St. Jean de Luz, as after all the rush here I shall like the quiet there and it will be nice being able to help Hylda with Aunt Alice, as of course being there in that empty house, now that Kathleen is gone, is very hard for her.

Truby King has been most entertaining and wanders up into my room, fully dressed at 7 a.m. and sits on my bed to tell me of the iniquities of the medical profession in England! They all went off two days ago to see a sun-cure hospital for tubercular children near San Raphael. I believe the results are quite extraordinary and the children bathe and go about almost naked.

*(Letter to Parents.)*



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## Chapter XXIX

SPRINGTIDE IN FRANCE—1919

FRANCE UNDEVASTATED—FRANCE DEVASTATED

## Chapter XXIX

### SPRINGTIDE IN FRANCE—1919

#### FRANCE UNDEVASTATED

IN some ways I was not sorry when my fortnight at Cannes was over. It had been an absorbingly interesting experience but it had been a strain. My brain was continually on the stretch trying to take down every important point during the morning conferences in my faulty shorthand—a mixture of Pitman's and of my own invention. The afternoons were spent writing out my cables and every meal was devoted to discussing the ills and woes of humanity with experts. One of my only days off had been a busman's holiday—a hundred and sixty mile drive in a Ford car listening to Truby King talking about mothers and babies while I wanted to forget the improvement of the human race for a while in the lovely surroundings of mountains, hill towns and fields carpeted with spring anemones! Thousands of Truby King's followers would doubtless have given half their worldly goods to have spent a day in such close proximity with the great man. But I must confess that for a short while I felt entirely indifferent to motherhood, breast-feeding and pre-natal care. I understood why the children of social reformers go to the bad! My only other day off had been a flutter at Monte Carlo with Ivy Lee—very exhilarating but certainly not restful.

Europe was denuded of rolling stock in the spring of 1919. The trains in France were as overcrowded as they had been during the early days of the war. Long-suffering mortals were packed like sardines in the compartments and a cross section of humanity sat, lay and stood with their household goods in the corridors. Apparently the American Red Cross alone possessed the secret of providing comfort for its protégés. An entire wagon-lit was

placed at the disposal of our party. As we fought our way through the seething crowds at Cannes station to our reserved carriage we salved our consciences with the thought that we had been working hard in the interests of humanity!

From Paris I wrote :

Hotel Wagram,

15 April.

We had one complete sleeping car for all the doctors. Truby King and I shared a two-berthed sleeper. I lunched with my American friends, then went round to see Arthur Stanley and tell him how things went off. He congratulated me on my articles which he said had been very interesting. He told me he had read every word. Then we attended the small Red Cross Conference with him, Sir Arthur Lawley and Ivy Lee.

I was now counting the minutes till my train left the Quai d'Orsay for St. Jean de Luz at the foot of the Pyrenees. My aunt\* had invited me to stay as long as I could at Baillénia—her Basque house—with her and my cousin. I was going to have a real care-free holiday at last, the first for five years. Dotted along life's path are certain interludes that stand out as perfect memories. It was eight years since I had experienced springtide in France. I had travelled around the continents since then. After my wanderings the spring of 1914 in England had been a revelation—nothing could be more lovely. And yet in my aunt's house on a hill-top facing La Rhune—a mount of transfiguration—over which soared vultures, I was in another enchanted world. The weather was perfect till the eve of my departure, when deluges of rain descended upon us, interpreting my feelings.

When I close my eyes I can see fields of asphodel, swaying gently in the spring breeze, lithospermum that painted the hillside, the blue of heaven and meadows golden with gorse.

Although I had not seen my aunt since my boyhood, when she and my uncle paid us a visit in Ireland shortly before his death, she occupied a special place in my affections.

\* Lady Brooke. My mother's sister.

I recalled a loving presence and great kindness to a small boy. For many years she had sent me special messages in her weekly letters to my cousin. My aunt was an aristocrat to her finger tips. I remembered thirty years before admiring her as she stood by our billiard table at home in flowing velvet and sparkling jewels. Then she was the radiant possessor of a great love. Now she was a gracious, frail and sad old lady, with snowy white ringlets, with soft chiffon veil round her head, lace and dainty furbelows. She still took a keen interest in the world around her. Since the beginning of the war she had lost her favourite son, Victor, and two daughters. Seeing her again after thirty years with the same kindly smile and the same deep-set brown eyes—now hauntingly sad—brought back a flood of memories. It was like opening a long disused box into which you had put boyhood treasures. Suddenly I stepped back into the feelings of a boy of eight. I remembered walking down to our railway station with my uncle and catching some moth-like butterflies with red and black wings in my net and taking them to him. My uncle was a big-game hunter, a naturalist and a friend of Huxley's. He entered into my excitement and knew at once to which species my captive belonged. I vividly remembered my bedroom at our old home, with its ochre Robinson-Crusoe wall-paper in the nursery, and my dog Strome, nicknamed Toby. I recalled the games I used to play. My favourite pastime was pretending I was captain of an ocean liner. In our garden I had had constructed a flat-roofed wooden shed, complete with improvised lavatory, only shown to special friends. A rickety ladder led from the saloon to the bridge. Here I would spend hours piloting the vessel through the plunging ocean to the distant tropic seas I had read of in *The Swiss Family Robinson* and *Masterman Ready*.

My aunt now led the life of an invalid.\* When my uncle died in 1891 the joy of life left her and gradually

\* She died sixteen months later.

she spent more and more of her days upstairs. When I was at Baillenia she never left her bedroom and I used to go up and sit by her bedside. Every year my cousin Hylda—her only remaining daughter—used to spend two months with her and they were the months my aunt looked forward to above all others. The stay in the South of France was anything but a rest for the daughter, who daily spent many hours in her mother's heated bedroom. My aunt had a plan of life which was never departed from. Inherently, she was not selfish, but like many invalids absorbed in her own daily regime she forgot how engulfing were the claims she made on others. The temperature had always to be at exactly 68° Fahrenheit, the window open just so many inches. Her possessions had always to be in their accustomed place. On occasions my aunt went into her boudoir for tea. Before my cousin tucked her up for the night after these afternoons, when she had been absent from her bedroom, a stick had to be thrust under her bed to be sure no burglars were in hiding! Perhaps my aunt's fears were due to the fact that she always kept a hundred pounds in banknotes in a leather case in her room.

My cousin was off duty till a quarter to twelve each morning, and we used to go for long walks over the hills covered with asphodel, past Basque farms and through winding lanes and open meadows. She was familiar with every inch of the countryside and knew just where to find the local wild flowers. Near a disused well king-cups made a vivid splash of colour; by the banks of the Nivelle thrift grew. Our favourite walk was to a hidden shrine, reached by a path bordered by mossy banks in which the primroses nestled:

At every step the sense of enchantment grew. And then all at once the curtain of hazel parted, the stream leaving its sheltering banks spread itself in a pool shining and clear, and there beside the pool, by creepers and ivy overgrown, stood a little ruined shrine. . . . The altar was gone and the sanctuary bare, but still there hung about the hallowed spot like incense the ineffable wonders of Love's Holy Mysteries. . . . By the little pool a weeping





"Le Petit Vieux" and Simone. She adored her master and was inseparable from him.

willow stood, the long branches in spring's tender green, spreading wide and dipping towards the water, and at its side, with a pang, I saw a large basket of homely washing brought down from the farm high on the hill. The very thought seemed a desecration till I came to see beauty, too, in the idea of life's soiled and damaged things being brought to these healing waters for cleansing and renewal.

. . . Oft have I found my way again to that little shrine—in my heart I call it St. John of the Light—and always with the sense of drawing near to the secret which guides the stars in their courses and upholds the foundations of the earth, the secret which mind cannot conceive, and which the soul, that immortal thing, with veiled eyes dares hardly gaze upon, but which some day it shall see, not as in a glass darkly, but face to face.\*

. . . . .

We always had lunch out of doors. I shall never forget those meals at Baillenia. "Monsieur" Laurent was steward and chef.† He had originally been my uncle's valet and used to go on shooting expeditions with him into the Pyrenees. He was a first-rate chef, and had served his apprenticeship with Dumas *père*. Laurent had been with my aunt for forty years and was as devoted to the family as they were to him. How pleased Ruskin would have been with their relationship. Laurent's presence pervaded the place. When in want of anything, we consulted "le Petit Vieux", who would probably be found walking about the garden with a hen under his arm, with whom he was carrying on an animated conversation. Or perhaps he would be taking an airing in his white apron, with *béret* on his head, escorted by his female cat "Simone" that adored her master with all the devotion that the feline species is capable of. I thought Simone rather forbidding. She was grey and gaunt and walked sedately with tail erect. When Laurent went on periodical visits to his property at Pau, Simone escorted her master to the railway station at St. Jean de Luz—a mile away. During his several days' absence she never returned to Baillenia—what she did or where she went no one ever knew. But

\* H. d. V. in *Overseas*, October, 1920.

† Laurent is I am glad to say still alive and is over ninety. He lives at Pau.



she never failed to be on the platform at St. Jean de Luz to greet her master on his return ! Laurent's love of his hens was such that he could not undertake the gruesome but necessary task of cutting their throats, so this job was entrusted to Marie, the kitchen maid, who presumably had no qualms.

Laurent provided us with Voisin cooking at each repast. His fertile brain always thought out some new surprise. Frothy omelettes, followed by *poulet en cocotte* and washed down by local white wine that became liquid gold when the sun's rays were upon it. Our table was under a mimosa tree, a great vase of irises stood in the middle and through stone-pines we looked across the valley at the western chain of the Pyrenees. We ended our meals with a Spanish sweet called *turon*, coffee worthy of Escoffier, and a glass of Izarra.

My diary does but scant justice to my ten days at St. Jean :

- 19 April. To Wishing Well. Mountains so lovely in evening light.
- 20 „ Lunch out of doors again. Irises on table.
- 21 „ Wandered about wet fields hunting for flowers.  
Wrote English-Speaking Union articles.
- 22 „ Fields of asphodel. Champagne air. Smell of gorse.
- 23 „ Those lunches out of doors. Blue cloudless sky.  
Blue mountains.
- 24 „ Climbed up hills covered with gorse and lithospermum.
- 25 „ Looked at "Vautours" planing above La Rhune.

The only letter I wrote to my parents seems very inadequate :

Villa Baillenia,  
St. Jean de Luz, B.P.,

25 April.

Ever since I got here it has been perfect weather and I could not have had a more restful or healthier holiday. I have practically been out of doors the whole time. . . .

This is the daily itinerary which never varies. Breakfast at 8.45 and afterwards till 11.45 Hylda and I have gone for long walks in the hills. Then she goes up to Aunt Alice till lunch time and

I write or read out of doors in the garden. At 1.0 lunch out of doors and afterwards we usually sit in garden or go down to the town to do commissions, about half a mile. At 4.0 Hylda goes to Aunt A. and with exception of break for tea is with her till 8.0. I usually go for walks then by myself.

The view towards the mountains is beautiful and the great charm is that you are right away in complete country in a minute and the Basque peasants' farms with their ox carts are a constant joy.

Aunt A. is I think a good deal older looking than I expected and she certainly looks very frail. . . .

I wonder if you saw the article in the *Observer* about Northcliffe, by Garvin. I thought it was very good. If only he (N.) would stop attacking Lloyd George. . . .

I think what strikes me most about Aunt A. is the sadness. She is extraordinarily nice about the O.S. Club and always has *Overseas* in her room.

To preserve the vividness of my impressions, I quote from an article written for *Overseas* :

The Basque peasants have been working hard on the side of the hill since daybreak and the creaking of their returning ox-cart proclaims the approach of sunset. The stillness of a perfect spring evening proves to be an illusion, in reality there is a chorus of sound. Down in the valley a dog is barking and from under the eaves of the house the nesting swallows keep darting to and fro. A bee, laden, no doubt, with honey from the stocks and wallflowers in the garden, is humming on her way home. The birds are chirruping to each other in the apple tree, just bursting into blossom. Cattle, being driven home to the mountains from the market on the dusty road, are bellowing, while the call of old Jean Jacques to his patient oxen—*ee yaa-a*—is a sound one never tires of.

La Rhune, the mountain standing sentinel to the higher ranges of the Pyrenees, which this morning shone out so clearly, is bathed in a purple grey haze, its rocky outlines softened and its summit tipped by a white cloud. Sedately and in great curves a vulture is circling out across the Nivelle, a stream of silver at the bottom of the valley. He soars higher and higher towards the mountain top, till he is lost to sight.

The sun, a great red ball, disappears on the western horizon across the bay towards the Spanish coast, and there is hardly any afterglow. It grows dark suddenly and a fresh wind strikes chill. The world has become very still save for the croaking of the frogs in the swamp near the wood.

## FRANCE DEVASTATED

I once journeyed from mid-winter to mid-summer in forty-eight hours. I left New York in a November blizzard and two days later was sailing in tropic seas south of Cape Hatteras. I now went from heaven to hell in forty-eight hours, from the peaceful hill-top of a paradise in the Pyrenees to the devastated desolation of the battle area. After an unpleasant night sitting bolt-upright in a stuffy and crowded carriage—with the steam trickling down the closed windows, frequently pulled back to consciousness by the restlessness of my neighbour, a French boy, whose commonplace features his parents regarded with adoring eyes—I arrived at the Quai d'Orsay. A day was spent in Paris finishing up Red Cross duties and getting permits to go to the battle area :

Hotel Wagram, Paris,  
Good Friday, 1919.

Paderewski has been staying in this hotel and we had sentries at the door and people in Polish uniform kept wandering about. Paderewski was wearing a top hat and his hair was bushier than ever—as he left there were crowds outside and cinema operators. . . the last time I saw him was at a private piano recital in London !

Everyone is rather excited about the Chief's attack on Lloyd George. He certainly is an extraordinary man and must be attacking someone. If he isn't, he isn't happy. I don't wonder that Lloyd George hit back, but I am afraid the Chief will get in the last word. . . .

Yesterday I decided to go out to Rheims. It took three and a half hours by train and one passed through Château Thierry and from one's carriage saw ruined village after ruined village. Rheims is a city of ruins, the only thing I have seen at all like it is Pompeii or Timgad in Tunis, and the Cathedral is merely a shell. It was bitterly cold, but fortunately in a portion of a tumble-down hotel I was able to get an eatable meal. After lunch I took a motor and drove fourteen kilometres to the battlefields, where one can wander about the Hindenburg line. The devastation passes belief. It will be a long time before the land is cultivated again, though in other places German prisoners, of whom there are any quantity, are hard at work filling up shell holes. It is very depressing . . . . The barbed wire entanglements are amazing. (*Letter.*)

I wrote in *The Landmark* :

As I was waiting in the queue at the Gare de l'Est in Paris to take my ticket for Rheims, a "doughboy" some six feet four inches in height addressed me in a deep voice. We soon became friends and compared notes on current events. Of his own accord he turned to the subject of Anglo-American friendship. "This war," said he, "has taught us English-speaking peoples what a bond language is and what a lot of things we have in common. Yesterday out at Versailles I met a bunch of Australians, and I felt that we were practically the same people. If the world is going to be any sort of a safe place in future it will only be by our sticking together and getting to know each other better." The time of waiting till I reached the *guichet* passed pleasantly, and I was sorry to bid good-bye to this warm advocate of English-speaking friendship.

For four-and-a-half years the eyes of civilisation have been turned anxiously to Rheims and the state of its Cathedral has been a matter of concern to all nations. . . . By leaving Paris at 7.30, Rheims, or rather what remains of the city, is reached at 10.30. For Rheims is nothing but a shell, a dead city. You walk down long streets of empty buildings, in varying stages of devastation, without passing a soul. Here and there some of the more enterprising citizens are returning and are opening their businesses amid the ruins. On the way to the Cathedral I noticed a butcher's shop and a green-grocer and two inns "carrying on," while several postcard and curio dealers had opened temporary booths among the debris. On account of falling masonry one is not allowed inside the Cathedral, but one can walk right round it. It is but a shell, and the headless statuary and pock-marked façade, even when it is restored, will for all time bear witness to the tribulations of the city.

Ground over which there has been hard fighting is much the same everywhere, and consequently there is a certain sameness about visiting the battlefields of the Western front. Perhaps as good a sample as any of the devastated area is some twelve kilometres from Rheims, where one can follow the Hindenburg line for miles, and where the Germans launched their great attack on 15 July last year. A scene of devastation greets the eyes on all sides: the gaunt branchless trees, the great chalk trenches and dugouts, the shell-marked No-man's land, the interminable barbed wire entanglements. There is no sign of life at first sight and even the coming of spring is unheralded in this land of desolation. On closer inspection grape-hyacinth, cowslip and erodium reveal themselves, while far overhead a solitary lark is singing undaunted. The battlefields call to mind forests in North America destroyed by fire, and parts

of Yellowstone Park and the Rotorua hot-springs of New Zealand, in the neighbourhood of the geysers, where the sulphurous waters have blighted the surface of the earth.

Debris of the battlefield still lies scattered about. One scrambles down into the front-line trench of the Hindenburg line, past "Villa Rheims," to the first of three derelict German tanks still lying astraddle some trenches, and distinguishable by their iron crosses—great inert monsters of phantasy they lie, with their nozzles deeply embedded—"Lotti" and "Liesel" were their names. On the side of one of them a witty Frenchman had written "*Je ne recommencerais plus. Fritz*"—and pray God his words may be true.

On the way back to my motor I visited the Fort de la Pompelle, which was taken and retaken seventeen times, finally to remain in the hands of the French. Two *poilus* belonging to the 138th Regiment acted as my guides. They took especial pride in doing so, for in one day's fighting their regiment lost 230 effectives in defending it. We wandered among the ruins. By the side of a dazzling white wall were five little wooden crosses marking the graves of some comrades; slightly removed from them was another cross with the single word "Inconnu." How many crosses, scattered over the battlefields of Europe, bear a similar inscription, I wonder?

Back in Paris,

30 April.

Went to see Mair—usual red tape about going to Cologne. Finally decided to go straight to the Canadian G.H.Q. at Wimereux near Boulogne and I got the military people to wire saying I was coming. It has been rather difficult in Paris to-day as there is a general strike.

"Saskatoon Club,"

Cambrai l'Abbé, near Arras.

2 May.

I left Paris yesterday, May Day, and there was a complete stoppage of all work— *chômage* they call it. There were no undergrounds, no taxis, absolutely nothing, and no work of any kind done. At my hotel I could not get any kind of food, and so had to go down into an underground kitchen, and was given a bowl of coffee—no cups—by the cook, and a roll of bread; ate it by candle light as the electric light was turned off.

I knew it would be impossible to drive to the station so I took my things to the Gare du Nord the previous evening and then just walked the two-and-a-half miles in rain yesterday morning, carrying my pyjamas and shaving things rolled up in the pockets of my Burberry.

Regina Hotel, Wimereux,

1 May, 1919.

Thanks to the American Red Cross I had my place comfortably reserved in the train. The only person I saw at the station that I knew was Sir David Henderson. At Boulogne station I was met by Colonel Bovey, the Canadian, on behalf of the General. He took me in a car to this place. I dined with him in the evening. They are going to send a conducting officer with me and I am to go to Ypres and Vimy Ridge. I am staying as the guest of the Canadian Headquarters.

Camblain l'Abbé,

(About five miles from Arras).

2 May.

Last night I dined with six Canadian officers, they were all most friendly. After dinner they danced with WAACS. I danced a waltz or two. Breakfast at 8.30, we started in two cars at 9. Mine was an open car with windscreen. I had on my overcoat and a Burberry over it and was very glad as we got covered with mud. Colonel Bovey came with me and also a French officer.

We did over a hundred miles and stopped for coffee at St. Pol, and then went to a Canadian rest house in the wilderness for lunch at 1.30. Nice hot soup, excellent cold beef, fried potatoes and Christmas pudding and champagne! I was ravenous. After lunch we went to Arras across the Vimy Ridge and then Lens: Lens is an absolute wilderness of desolation, not a house left, nothing but a mass of bricks, iron and mud—the country where Alan\* was. Colonel Bovey knew Alan quite well and liked him very much. The desolation passes all belief. We passed Givenchy where Bevil was killed. On this ground about 150,000 French, British and Canadians lost their lives during the war. The little cemeteries with white crosses are so pathetic. A Major Booth is looking after me here. Being here is just like an oasis in the wilderness. I am sleeping in a little iron hut, like the ones one sees from the train near Etaples and from the Boulogne train. It is a long one-storey building with rain trickling through the roof in three places.

Saint Omer,

3 May.

I am back in civilisation. Been motoring since 9 o'clock this morning. I have been to Ypres. While I am writing they are dancing downstairs. Dancing is becoming a perfect mania. I suppose it is the reaction from the war. I must go back to

\* My first cousin, Major-General Alan Brooke.

Camblain l'Abbé. After dinner we looked up the route for the next day on the map.

The journey was Bethune, Armentières, Ploegsteert, Messines, Ypres, and Poperinghe, Cassel and finally Saint Omer and then Boulogne. The whole way from Bethune to Ypres was an absolutely devastated area with not a house, especially from Armentières to Ypres it was a kind of inferno, huge shell holes filled with stagnant water and *débris* of battle, no flowers, no trees, no signs of life, dotted about with little crosses so many of which had nothing on them. It is a loathsome place.

Then we had rather an unpleasant experience. When we were right up on the Messines Ridge, not a human being for several miles, we came to an inconceivably bad bit of road, a real quagmire. I said to the driver we had much better turn back and try and go round another way, but he was obstinate and said he would get through, but I knew we wouldn't! So we started off and after going about fifty yards the car came to a complete standstill with the wheels deep in ruts of oozing mud and just alongside a large shell hole into which we might easily have sunk. At times I had visions of our leaving the car and walking miles and trying to get horses to haul us out, though where we should have got help I can't imagine. The driver was determined to try and get out so we collected stones and broken pieces of board and then we pushed as hard as we could, and after about an hour of sliding and slithering back into the mud, during which we got covered with mud from head to foot, we managed at last to get on to the hard surface again.

Then we retraced our way past companies of Chinese and German prisoners clearing up the battlefields and found our way to Ypres, just a mass of ruins. We motored back quickly the fifty-five miles through country not affected by the war, it looked so smiling and green it didn't seem possible that it belonged to the same world. (*Letters.*)

The following is an account of my visit written for *Overseas\** at the time:

From the few mounds of brick and debris which were once Ploegsteert, we climbed through Ploegsteert Wood, now a Chinese shack-town, bringing back memories of Chinese quarters in Jamaica, Panama and elsewhere, up on to the crest of the Messines Ridge. Here was an upland inferno, where no living thing or human habitation was to be seen in any direction. Wherever we looked it was a blighted land of horror. The bare gaunt tree stumps

\* Printed in June issue, 1919.

pointed with their broken branches heavenwards, and no wonder, for all around was despair. Huge shell-holes filled with stagnant green water full of frog-spawn, unexploded shells, old petrol tins, a horse's skeleton, a boot, half-buried helmets, pickaxes, hand grenades, more barbed wire than you ever imagined in the world, broken concrete pill-boxes, camouflaged galvanised iron dug-outs, gas plant, and every here and there in this land of desolation a little nameless wooden cross marking the site of a lonely grave. On we motored, past miles and miles of this desolation.

Then we came across one of the many parties of German prisoners helping to clear up the *débris*. Wild mustard and dandelions were growing between the shell-holes—a solitary magpie fluttered down from a tree stump and some sparrows were looking for food. As we approached Ypres we overtook a fat Belgian woman and a boy in a little cart drawn by two willing dogs, and then on to the ruins of the Cloth Hall. Outside the Church Army hut in the debris were several Red Cross cars. Near by some German prisoners belonging to the 273rd prisoners' camp were hard at work in the sun.

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## Chapter XXX

1919—THE YEAR NO ONE REMEMBERS

TRYING TO SETTLE DOWN—ATLANTIC FLIGHTS—MY VIEWS  
IN 1919 ON THE PEACE TREATY—"A LAND FIT FOR HEROES"

# Chapter XXX

1919—THE YEAR NO ONE REMEMBERS

## TRYING TO SETTLE DOWN

LONDON seemed very humdrum after France. There was an entry in my diary "Life and its problems pressing—I had to hold conference on staff reduction at Overseas Club." Now that our war funds and war work had ceased I had to reconstitute the Overseas League on a peace-time basis and drastically reduce our staff, always an unpleasant task. Till the Overseas League moved to Vernon House\* we went through two difficult years. I had frequently to explain that it was not a war time organisation and was founded four years before the war. But it was depressing to find our aims so completely misunderstood.

87, Victoria Street,  
London, S.W.1.

6 May.

After lunch went round to the Foreign Office to see Tyrrell. He wanted to consult me about preventing overlapping in connection with the various Anglo-American organisations.

7 May.

We had an Overseas League lunch. I was in the Chair and sat between Jack Seely and Lord Meath. Lord Meath's wife died twelve months ago after a married life of fifty years. They meant very much to each other. He told me that he cannot settle down to anything and that he feels lost without her. However do people bear things like that?

9 May.

Lunched with Sydney Walton who used to be at Ministry of Food, to discuss scheme in connection with entertaining Canadian soldiers before they leave. (*Letters.*)

During the early months of 1919 I had been concerned by the lack of imagination shown by the authorities in

\* In Park Place, St. James Street ; purchased in 1921 as our War Memorial.

permitting the Dominion troops to return home without a proper send-off. At an Overseas League lunch held on 26 March I tried to counteract the official inertia :

The Chairman said there was an extraordinary lack of imagination in this Empire. Could they conceive any other great nation allowing her sons who had fought in the bloodiest war in history to sail to the distant parts of the world without giving them a send-off from the people of the capital of the Empire and wishing them a safe return?

He had written to Lord Milner (Secretary of State for the Colonies) on the subject, and asked him if they could rely on his support to enable Londoners to see the troops before they returned home. Lord Milner had kindly promised to take up the matter. (*Times*, 27 March, 1919.)

87, Victoria Street, S.W.1.

9 May.

At 11 I went to the American Embassy. It was rather gratifying that the Ambassador and Consul-General sent for me to assist in connection with the laying of flowers on Commemoration Day (30 May), upon the graves of the two thousand American soldiers who are buried in the British Isles. It was a tribute to the E.-S.U. that it should be the only British organisation asked to help, considering that it is not yet a year old. The Committee consists of the American Ambassador as Chairman, General Biddle, head of the U.S. Army here, Admiral Knapp, head of the U.S. Navy, Skinner, American Consul-General, the head of the American Red Cross, Sir Arthur Stanley, Campbell Stuart and myself. After lunch I went round to see Major George Haven Putnam,\* who has just arrived from America. He really cares about British-American friendship. He is full of energy, although seventy-five, and still plays tennis, but he talks too much about himself. How tiresome these self-centred people are. I pray that I may not become garrulous in my old age. But after all this is a small matter and he is really selfless in his devotion to the cause. Putnam has crossed the Atlantic fifty-six times.

I am rather upset by the way everyone is going on about the German delegates at Versailles and gloating over their dejection.†

Did I tell you that I am in high favour with Northcliffe? Campbell Stuart says he wants to get me back into the organisation, but I have no intention of going back. Such a summer day, the

\* I had asked Major Putnam the previous year to help in the task of organising the English-Speaking Union in America.

† The German delegates received the Peace Treaty on 7 May. It was finally signed at Versailles on 28 June.

trees are nearly out and the bluebells in St. James's Park near the catalpa tree are lovely. The apple blossoms and the cherry trees are in full glory. I am going to have my bicycle overhauled.

11 May, 1919.

I am going through rather a difficult time. One thing is that I have outgrown purely Empire patriotism. My Empire allegiance must dovetail into the larger allegiance. I have been thinking about it a good deal. Also I long for a more living Faith.

Had a letter from Northcliffe saying he will be unable to come to the Overseas League Annual Meeting; he has got to have a slight operation on his throat, but he does not think it is anything malignant. He has gone up in weight.

Tuesday, 13 May.

Lunch with Harry Wilson to discuss scheme of possible amalgamation with the Royal Colonial Institute. He said he thought the ideal arrangement would be for me to run the joint society.\*

14 May.

Sir Arthur Stanley has just been. He wanted me to help him about a scheme. I lunched with Owen Wister and we discussed Anglo-American relations and his new book.

17 May.

The country is looking so beautiful, the lilac out and the hawthorn. It seems so marvellous that the war is really over, and that there is a normal summer to look forward to. Went round to the garage and got my Ford; I drove it off as if it had never been laid up. Really it is a marvellous car to be in perfect condition after being laid up for two years!

18 May

As far as I can make out the War Office gratuity amounts to £300, just think, and I never counted on more than £60! It makes me happy because it means now that I can run my Ford for the next two years without any bother. I have just paid up £100 as my gift to the Overseas War Memorial Fund which leaves me £200 in hand.

19 May.

Lunched with Arthur Stanley. We had a private room at the Savoy, about thirty, to hear the latest news of the Red Cross. They tried to get me to undertake another job but I refused. Sat next to Truby King.

\* This referred to a proposal to amalgamate the Overseas League and the Royal Colonial Institute, a scheme which was very nearly put into effect.

21 May.

Lord Beauchamp and the Mayor of Malvern came to see me about working together with the English-Speaking Union. Lunched with the Northcliffes. Northcliffe goes into a nursing home next week for the operation on his throat. He is so friendly to me. He introduced me as one of the few people on this side of the Atlantic who really understands Anglo-American relations, and I felt gratified.

Round to see Mrs. Astor.\* I wish there were more like her. Behind her wit and breezy manner lies a really deep consecration of purpose. No wonder Lord Grey liked her.

Lunched with Sir John Hanbury Williams, who used to be Military Secretary to Lord Grey in Canada. He was very interesting about the Tsar and his extraordinary ignorance of what was going on in those last few weeks before he abdicated. The Tsar used to talk quite openly with him. (*Letters.*)

### ATLANTIC FLIGHTS

A writer in the Popular Press has recently dubbed 1919 as "the year no one remembers." I presume he meant that it was dwarfed by its predecessor 1918. I shall always think of it as the year in which North America and Britain were brought within a day's flight of one another. In May and June we witnessed stirring events. First came Harry Hawker's brave attempt to make the first direct Atlantic flight. The present generation can have little conception of the breathless interest with which the latest bulletins of his progress were followed. In *Overseas*† I wrote:

Those who happened to be in London on Sunday, 25 May, will long remember the occasion. It was at my club that I first read of the safety of Hawker and his gallant comrade Commander K. MacKenzie Grieve. Shortly after 3 o'clock an early edition of the *Sunday Evening Telegram* proclaimed to an amazed public the glad tidings that Hawker was safe. Not since Armistice Day have there been so many joyful faces in London. At first the news seemed too good to be true. Certain it is that whoever first succeeds in flying from Newfoundland to Ireland, it will be

\* Lady Astor.

† June, 1919, page 31.

Hawker's name which will be for ever associated with the great adventure of the Atlantic flight.

The ordinary public, and even the experts, had given up all hope of his safety by Thursday, as nothing was known of his fate after 5 a.m. on Monday 19 May, when the red light of his machine was seen by the cableship *Faraday* in mid-Atlantic. . . . On Sunday the 25th very few people believed that he was still alive but among the number was his brave wife. Incredible as it may seem, on Saturday the 24th she told her friends that Sunday was her lucky day and that she felt sure there would be news of her husband.

The story of Hawker's attempt . . . will be handed down for all time as an epic of our race. No matter who succeeds in first flying from Newfoundland to Ireland, it is Hawker's name we shall remember. . . \*

When we read the story of his start in a one-engined aeroplane, constructed for flying over land, of his discarded under-carriage, of his insufficient wireless equipment, of the British Air Ministry's warning of adverse weather conditions, we must admire his wonderful pluck, however foolhardy it may have seemed. †

The dramatic nature of Hawker and Grieve's attempt to fly the Atlantic and the long drawn-out suspense prior to the receipt of the news of rescue tended temporarily to make us forget the progress of Lt.-Commander Read and the gallant crew of the N.C.4, who were then waiting at the Azores for a favourable opportunity to continue their journey to Lisbon and thence to Great Britain. Our sense of proportion soon righted itself, however, and at 2.20 p.m. on the memorable Saturday, when the N.C.4 was sighted outside Plymouth breakwater escorted by British flying-boats and seaplanes flying the Stars and Stripes and the Union Jack, the good people of Plymouth realised that history was being made before their eyes. . . . It was only fitting . . . that the airmen should have repaired to the Barbican, where the Mayor, standing on the actual stone from which the Pilgrim Fathers stepped on to the *Mayflower*, extended a civic reception to them. ‡

We had hardly finished welcoming Commander Read of the N.C.4 and his associates when the news that Captain J. Alcock and Lieutenant W. Brown had made the first *direct* Atlantic flight reached London on Sunday, 15 June. I learnt of the epoch-making achievement from the poster

\* So much for prophecy !  
‡ *Landmark*, July, 1919.

† *Landmark*, Vol. I, page 328.

of the *Sunday Evening Telegram*, "Successful Atlantic Flight. Great British Achievement." The two British airmen left St. John's, Newfoundland at 5.13 p.m. summer time on Saturday 14 June and landed in Ireland at 9.40 a.m. on Sunday, 15 June, accomplishing the coast to coast flight of 1,880 miles over the ocean in 15 hours and 57 minutes. I have been to most of the lunches tendered to the pioneers of flight, from that given by the *Daily Mail* to Bleriot the conqueror of the Channel, to the great luncheon to Colonel Lindbergh in 1927. I never remember a more dramatic occasion than the moment when Alcock, bewildered by a hurricane of cheers, stood up to address us. In a characteristic message to Alcock and Brown, Northcliffe said that he looked forward "with certainty to the time when the London morning newspapers will be selling in New York in the evening," and he continued, "I rejoice at the good augury that you departed from and arrived at those two portions of the British Commonwealth, the happy and prosperous Dominion of Newfoundland and the future equally happy and prosperous Dominion of Ireland."\*

1 June, 1919. Friday—Commemoration Day—was grilling, and we all went down in a special train to Brookwood. I had to look after the Prince of Wales' equerry, a very nice quiet fellow called Piers Legh. The E.-S.U. sent a monster wreath and altogether I think the Americans were pleased.

On Wednesday I went to the Hawker lunch and sat between Sutton and Sir Marcus Samuel, who has bought half Mayfair! Hawker and Grieve are the most unassuming individuals and they got a great welcome. Mrs. Hawker, in large picture-hat, looked very pretty and came in for a lot of congratulations. They were besieged by people wanting their menus signed!

I had to go round to see Tyrrell on Friday at the Foreign Office to discuss Anglo-American problems. He is always very friendly and it is nice having someone there to turn to.

8 June, 1919. Our staff now numbers fifty-eight and I am trying to see if we cannot cut it down, but it is so much easier to add on than cut down. Our new accountant is a man called Major E. W.

\* Let us hope Northcliffe's prophecy will yet be realised.

Pither. He did very well in the war and was in the machine-gun corps. He is a nice reliable man.\*

I also had several interviews with Sir William Wiseman, who is supposed to be the most influential Englishman in America as he is the liaison officer between Colonel House and the British Government. He is a great believer in Colonel H.

*Sunday, 22 June, 1919.* On Friday I went to the *Daily Mail* lunch to Alcock and Brown. They were given a great reception and Winston Churchill and the American Ambassador both made excellent speeches. It was very dramatic hearing the two airmen describing their flight. It certainly was a wonderful achievement and they were very lucky to get across as they did, as there was mist all the way. (*Letters.*)

### MY VIEWS IN 1919 ON THE PEACE TREATY

*"In this country we are reaching the conviction that, whether with or without reservation, we must join in the League or surrender the world to chaos—a chaos which will soon invade our own land. We must enter the League, or after winning the war we shall lose the peace."* William H. P. Faunce. In 1920, President of Brown University, Providence, R.I., U.S.A.

When M. Clemenceau rose from his seat at the long conference table in the Hall of Mirrors at Versailles—where the German Empire was proclaimed in 1871—at 3.45 on Saturday afternoon, 28 June, and said, "Peace is now an accomplished fact", the batteries in the gardens thundered out a salute of a hundred-and-one guns and the windows of the conference hall rattled. As I read the picturesque accounts of the historic function in the Sunday papers I felt no enthusiasm. The Golden Peace-number of the *Daily Mail* on Monday, 30 June left me unmoved.† It seemed to me that a great opportunity had been missed. This was peace-making in the old style. My belief in the creation of a new and better Europe had gradually been undermined but I still pinned my hopes to the League

\* Major Pither, Financial Secretary of the *Overseas League*, has looked after its finances with devotion and conspicuous success ever since.

† Northcliffe sent me a signed copy as a souvenir.



of Nations and the British-American guarantee of French security. Some of my comments on the Peace treaty, written for *Overseas* at the time, are printed here :

The publication of the terms has caused no particular enthusiasm, for the very good reason that many people are by no means sure that in their present form they mean lasting peace. . . . One might indeed despair, were it not that the League of Nations, in however shadowy a form, has emerged. To it we must look as the future hope of mankind.\*

Under the heading "Seeds of future wars," I wrote :

Whether the Germans sign the Treaty or no, the root-vice of the whole Treaty is, as Mr. Garvin says in the *Observer*, that it leaves the German race no real hope except in revenge—no matter how long the revenge may have to be deferred. And Mr. Garvin is not overstating the case, for the German people as a whole, Republican, Monarchist, and Socialist, consider that the peace terms inflict a lasting wrong upon them, and their children, and their children's children. Prince Lichnowsky, who last year acknowledged to the full Germany's guilt in causing the war, stated in Berlin, "My standpoint is that we should in no circumstances accept the present draft." No one quarrels with the provisions for ensuring restitution and reparation to Belgium to the last farthing, with the return of Alsace-Lorraine to France, with the establishment of the mandatory system in the former German colonies among other matters, but there can be no justification for placing sections of Europe predominantly German under alien rule. That the peace terms will remain in their present form is most unlikely, and if the League of Nations is to become the great moral force in the world, which we believe it will, sooner or later justice will be done.

When those views appeared over my signature in *Overseas*, I received many indignant letters criticising my point of view!

On the subject of the proposed British-American guarantee to France I wrote :

As a recent visitor to France, I could not fail to be impressed by the French distrust of the League of Nations idea. This point

\* *Overseas*, June, 1919, page 27.

has been emphasized by Mr. Frank H. Simonds, the American publicist, in his interesting cables to the *Times*, and by other writers. One has to wander about the ruined streets of Rheims, of Arras, of Lens to understand the French view-point, but French fears have been met by the pledge of President Wilson and Mr. Lloyd George on behalf of our two peoples, to come to the rescue of France in the event of an unprovoked attack by Germany. This alliance, guarantee—call it what you will—requires of course the endorsement of the Senate and of our own Houses of Parliament ; but it is hardly conceivable that either of the English-speaking peoples will withhold their approval. It is to this promise of aid on behalf of the English-speaking democracies that the French people are looking for their future security rather than to the League of Nations.\*

and again :

If humanity is to be saved from the nightmare of another Armageddon it will only be by the creation of a new world-order. Those million-odd words in the Peace Treaty, with all its seals and signatures, will mean nothing if there is not a change of heart, not only in Germany, but in all nations. The League of Nations by which we set so much store will be reduced to impotence if it is not backed by the moral force of an enlightened public opinion. . . . We will be no party to doctrines of undying hatred to any people.†

But there was one note struck at Versailles that made an especial appeal to me : the introduction of the mandate system of trusteeship in governing subject peoples. It was a matter on which I had long held strong views—views which I was glad to find were shared by T. E. Lawrence.

Another great step forward in civilisation was the substitution of the conception of trusteeship of the subject or non-adult peoples of Asia and Africa for that of individual ownership and economic exploitation. "We are done," rightly remarks Mr. Wilson, "with the annexations of helpless people, meant in some instances by some Powers to be used merely for exploitation.‡

The news from Germany during the early months of 1919 was disturbing. I regretted the policy of still

\* *Landmark*, June, 1919, page 322.

† *Overseas*, August, 1919, pp. 28-29.

‡ *Landmark*, April, 1919, page 196.

depriving the German people of essential foodstuffs. On Armistice Day the blockade should have been raised. It is a mournful thought that I foretold in May 1919 what has since happened in Europe. I wrote :

On 7 May, the fourth anniversary of the sinking of the *Lusitania*, almost exactly six months after Armistice Day, the terms of the Peace Treaty were handed to the German delegates at the Trianon Palace Hotel, Versailles, by the representatives of the allied Powers. . . . Germany stood at the bar of civilisation, and her delegates had come to receive the sentence which the victors had passed on their country.

If the German people had any doubt in their minds as to the extent of their defeat, the nature of the terms must surely have removed them. A week of national mourning was proclaimed in the Fatherland, and whether Germany signs the treaty or no it is doubtful if the German people will ever acquiesce in its terms, except under dire compulsion. Those easy-going optimists who imagine that all will be well in the best of all worlds in the future may indeed receive a rude surprise before many years are past. To think that the Peace Treaty has settled Europe's problem is sheer lunacy.

If the Versailles Pact were all that had emerged from the six months' deliberations of the assembled Powers our minds would indeed be full of misgiving. But fortunately for humanity the actual peace treaty is not all. There is the League of Nations, which has become an accomplished fact, however shadowy a one at the moment, and the foundations on which that League is built are the community of interest and common ideals shared by the English-speaking world, so strikingly demonstrated by the relations of the English-speaking delegates at the Conference during the past four months.\*

In May, 1919, I printed in *Overseas* an article by Professor Sefton Delmer, an Australian by birth, who was English lecturer at Berlin University for many years till the outbreak of the war. He wrote :

I slipped into Prussia by way of Switzerland and Bavaria, having reached Munich in the middle of November, 1918. . . . The food shortage was a very real thing. It was not military collapse, nor was it political idealism, that converted the German proletariat—it was the food blockade of the British Fleet. The chief

\* *Landmark*, June, 1919, pp. 321-322.

inspiration to the formation of a German Republic was, undoubtedly *hunger*. The revolution was in its genesis, a stomachic rather than an ideal movement, and that is why one refrained from too readily believing in its permanence, at least until stronger evidence that what one had hitherto encountered was forthcoming. . . . But none of them, except Eisner, said a word that could be construed into an expression of penitence. . . . It seems frivolous to say so, but the next contrast that struck me between the German capital and London was the number of uneaten cats and dogs I saw at large and in security in the latter city. In Berlin these animals have long since been stolen, killed, and made into sausages. Thousands have met with this fate. It is worth remembering. The food difficulty will, in future, be the only thing that will prevent Germany from repeating the war.

Excerpts from letters written at this period follow :

87, Victoria Street, S.W.1.

29 June, 1919.

. . . I have had a full week. On Monday I lunched with the Arthur Lees (now Lee of Fareham) in their house, which is actually in Westminster Abbey gardens! She is American and charming. She and her sister, Miss Faith Moore, have had the Abbey bells rehung at their expense and given two new bells named after them—one called "Ruth"—the other "Faith." After lunch I had a strenuous talk with St. Loe Strachey,\* the editor of the *Spectator*, on the Irish question. The longer I live the more convinced I am that the Dominion solution is the only one.

In the evening I went to Mrs. Astor's party to help to look after the American students and was introduced again to General Pershing. It is extraordinary to think that he is the son of an Alsatian immigrant.

It was hard work trying to get to sleep last night as the people were celebrating Peace till the early hours of the morning.

6 July, 1919.

. . . On Wednesday the Chief sent for me. He was dressed, with his neck bandaged and really not looking too bad. The thing which was cut out of his neck he keeps in spirits in a bottle, and showed it to me! It must have been at least 3 inches across! You can imagine what a relief it must be to have it removed. He wants me to help him to raise some money for Serbian Medical Scholarships. I hope you read through the *Times American*

\* Three years later Strachey invited me to become his partner in the *Spectator*.

*Supplement.* I wrote five columns of it. Wickham Steed has been very decent and has given prominence to everything I have sent him lately.

I managed to get Colonel Arthur Murray to arrange for the Stars & Stripes to be flown on the Houses of Parliament on 4 July.

Sunday, 20 July, 1919.

. . . I thought the illuminations were rather poor though there was a fine display of fireworks. I was much impressed with the American troops, they were a splendid body of men and any nation might be proud of them. The scenes outside the public houses in the evening were disgusting and I yearned for prohibition and I was sorry that the Americans would see so many of our women drunk. Despite the *Daily Mail's* jibes at "Pussyfoot" it will be a bad day for us if we don't adopt prohibition. But people are so appallingly short-sighted.

Sunday, 3 August, 1919.

. . . All day I keep thinking of this Sunday in 1914, when I hurried off to Paris, and then the unforgettable scenes in the Boulevards, when the crowd went mad and shouted "à Berlin." It seems impossible to realise that was really five years ago.

One day this week I spent going round to see some of our "Kings of Commerce" to try and get them to help the E.-S.U. I tackled Sir Woodman Burbidge, Selfridge and Sir Thomas Lipton. Selfridge came up to the scratch and promised £100 a year for 3 years, but I drew blank with the other two. Lipton is a tough nut . . . . .! It was very disagreeable work but I have not done badly so far and have got up to £1,100 a year promised for three years, which still leaves me with £1,900 p.a. to collect, but I don't anticipate much trouble, only it takes time.

(*Letters.*)

### THE LAND FIT FOR HEROES.

*The victory has been won and the days of reconstruction are upon us. . . . Now that peace is with us it finds us unprepared. We are not yet adjusted to the new world in which we live. For it is a new world, and even if we could we will never return to the old world of 1914.* (E.W. in *Overseas*, Jan. 1919.)

On the day of the signing of Peace I escaped from the crowded streets of central London on my bicycle to the

old world garden in Battersea Park with its pergola entwined with crimson ramblers and purple clematis, and sat watching the sparrows bathe themselves upon the leaves of the water-lilies floating on the surface. Here was a place of peace. "Walked up and down the paths bordered with clumps of flowers and talked of life and its difficulties." (*Diary*.)

Even if conditions outside England were disappointing we had the engrossing task of reconstruction at home—the job Mr. Lloyd George so dramatically referred to as creating "a land fit for heroes." When the sweeping election victories were announced in the closing days of 1918 I was convinced that we were about to witness the greatest constructive job of social reform carried out in our lifetime. I wrote:

The new parliament is pledged to carry out a vast programme of social reform. . . . The rehousing of our people, the abolition of our slums, the caring for the health of our children, the settling of our soldiers on the land as smallholders, the rebuilding of our towns, the nationalisation of our railways, the better education of our people, the modernisation of our industries, the development of our Empire's resources are but a few of the problems we must grapple with. (*Overseas*).

There was no doubt about it we were at last going to make the old country a better place than it had ever been—worthy to be the pivot of a great world commonwealth. The men who had faced death in the mud sloughs of Flanders were coming back to take their place in the peace army which was going to pull down the miles of slumdom in our cities. If we resolutely set our hands to the task of reconstruction the war might after all have been worth while.

2 September, 1919.

. . . At the office we had rather a slack week for membership which was disappointing. The war-time enthusiasm is already beginning to flag.

3 September, 1919.

Dined at "Overton's." My friend the barman was so busy opening oysters that he was rather grumpy. Lunched with Sir

Francis Trippel, the man of German birth who is so wonderful at raising money. He wants me to help him with a scheme for raising £1,000,000 for a great charitable organisation. The society has offered him  $7\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. if he succeeds, and he would be quite prepared to make a fair arrangement with me. I said I would think it over carefully and let him know next week. If I can make £5,000 quite fairly it would be very helpful in my work, but needless to say I did not commit myself.\*

Sunday, 7 September, 1919.

. . . Dined with Ian Hay who is just back from America, where he has been since the Armistice, travelling all over the place. I do like him. He spent 6 weeks with the film ring at Los Angeles and saw quite a lot of Charlie Chaplin, who is a very nice little man he says. He was there when the latter's wife lost her little baby and Charlie Chaplin was much cut up about it. Ian Hay has got a very successful play running in London at the present time.

Another day I lunched with Percy Parker and one evening we went to see the Allenby film by Lowell Thomas at Covent Garden, which has been produced under our ægis.†

Sunday, 21 September, 1919.

. . . I have had a comparatively quiet week and my chief excitement was going down to the city to see Sir Thomas Latham and getting £250 from him for the E.-S.U., as our finances were rather low and I had to do something. He was so nice and so different to Tommy Lipton! and made me feel I was doing him a favour in taking it.

Sunday, 5 October, 1919.

. . . There is much more to be said for the strikers than appears on the surface and Lloyd George does not help things by calling the strike an "anarchist conspiracy." The truth of the matter is that the lower grade of railway servants want a living wage.

On Friday I took a deputation of the E.-S.U. to see Lord Reading to ask him to be our Chairman for the coming year and I am glad to say he accepted. He is just the man we want.

Sunday, 19 October, 1919.

. . . On Thursday I lunched with George Mair, whom I knew at the Ministry of Information. He is now on the staff of the League of Nations and he was giving a farewell lunch to a Swedish journalist. One of the men there was Sir Eric Drummond, the

\* I refused the offer as I had to concentrate on my own schemes.

† Under the ægis of the English-Speaking Union.

secretary of the League of Nations ; he struck me as being a very nice fellow.

Sunday, 26 October, 1919.

The Chief sent for me on Wednesday and I had a nice talk to him about labour problems and the Irish question. He was largely responsible for getting Thomas to go and see Lloyd George finally when they arrived at a settlement. As regards Ireland I am very glad *The Times* is publishing the true history of the Convention. I am more sanguine than I have been for a long time and the Chief is very hopeful, and he usually is not far out in his prophecies. On Monday I had to take a deputation from the Dover Patrol Fund to see the American Ambassador as they have £6,000 to allocate to putting up a statue in America to the memory of the American navy. They are leaving the handing over of the money to me.

Sunday, 2 November, 1919.

. . . The E.-S.U. has definitely made an offer for the premises in Trafalgar Square, they are really a little more than we can afford, but I hope to get Astor worked-up, that is John Astor.\*

The E.-S.U. annual meeting took place in the House of Lords on Thursday and went off very well. Lord Reading took the chair and spoke very nicely about my work and he is getting quite keen and I don't think we could have made a better choice.

On Friday Rothermere asked me to come round to see him and was very friendly and I was glad to see him again as I don't want completely to lose touch with him.

16 November, 1919.

Last night was our big E.-S.U. dinner to the American Ambassador and it was a great success. Much the largest thing of the kind we have ever had and 480 people there. The American Ambassador spoke charmingly and everyone seemed very pleased.

On Thursday I went to see Rothermere and he was very friendly. He wants to endow a Chair of American History at Oxford and I am trying to arrange matters with the authorities. I hope it comes off as it would be a very good thing. (*Letters.*)

\* Major Astor generously gave us £1,000 at a critical juncture.



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# Chapter XXXI

IRELAND AGAIN

AUGUST, 1919

# Chapter XXXI

## IRELAND AGAIN

IN the summer of 1919 I made another abortive attempt at Irish peacemaking. During a brief visit to Dublin in the Christmas holidays in 1918 I had established contact with the directors of Sinn Fein—the real leaders were under lock and key in British gaols. On my return to London at Northcliffe's request I set forth my views in an article in the *Daily Mail* entitled "The Irish Riddle—A visit to Sinn Fein Headquarters." The article was signed with the initials "E.W." A few days after its appearance I received this letter from Mr. W. M. Murphy, one of the best known men in Dublin and proprietor of the *Irish Independent*, in whose paper had appeared an appreciative reference to my article.

Dartry, Dublin.

9 January, 1919.

John Evelyn Wrench, Esq.,  
Ministry of Information,  
Norfolk Street, W.C.2.

Dear Mr. Wrench,

I read your Article in the *Daily Mail* when it appeared and was greatly struck with it though I had not the least idea who the author was.

It shews a more correct insight into the political situation in Ireland than anything I have read in the English Press recently. I send you herewith copy of some Speeches I made at the Convention, which it has only been possible to make public since the embargo on Convention Publications has been removed.

Yours sincerely,

WM. M. MURPHY.

I had thus described my visit :

Three young men were occupied in doing up parcels of comforts destined for the Sinn Fein prisoners in England from their faithful followers. The room was untidy, but there was plenty of activity. One of the young men, seeing that I had come in search of information, left his parcels and entered into conversation. There were

bundles of literature lying about, and he gave me a selection of pamphlets.

The conversation was just becoming interesting when a young lady, with short hair, smoking a cigarette,\* said, "Will you come up to see the Hon. Secretary?" I followed her and found myself in the first-floor office, on the mantelpiece of which was a large portrait of de Valera and a bust of Count Plunkett. From here the widespread activities of Sinn Fein are directed. In addition to the young lady there were two young men, one the Hon. Secretary, Mr. H. Boland, and the other Mr. J. J. O'Kelly, the director of the organisation. Later on two or three other young men strolled in.

The first impression I derived was that of youth. The Sinn Fein movement is run by young men, and they unquestionably understand their fellow-countrymen. As a result young Ireland to-day is overwhelmingly Sinn Fein. The secretary was a pleasant young Irishman, intense, enthusiastic, fanatical if you will, aflame with love of his country.

For two hours we talked in the friendliest manner. I let the young enthusiast tell me about the political creed which has swept the polls and captured, anyhow for the time being, the imagination of three-quarters of Ireland. Here is the essence of Sinn Feinism. Ireland is a nation, geographically, historically, ethnologically. Ireland has nothing to say to England, her hereditary foe, whom she cordially hates. Ireland wants to run her country herself; she has had enough of foreign domination. If the British Empire went to war to save Belgium and really stands for the self-determination of all peoples, how can it refuse to listen to the unmistakable voice of the majority of the Irish people?

Then the two leaders referred with pride to their wonderful organisation which has brought them such a sweeping victory, and stated that they proposed carrying on an active propaganda till they had converted a majority in Ulster to their doctrines. But their ramifications were world-wide, and till Great Britain listened to the voice of Ireland they would continue to foment trouble for her. In the United States, Australia and elsewhere they would act as a constant thorn in the side of Great Britain. In America in the past the Irish vote had kept the United States and the British Empire apart; it was the Irish vote which had prevented an Anglo-American entente or alliance. The Sinn Fein organisation would continue to keep the United States and Great Britain apart, and no real Anglo-American understanding was possible till Ireland's right to self-determination had been acknowledged.

Mr. Boland, who had taken part in the insurrection in 1916,

\* Unusual in those days!

had spent fifteen months in Portland Gaol. He said he liked many Englishmen but hated England—by England he did not mean Scotland or Wales. Many of the Sinn Fein leaders are teetotallers, they are intensely religious, they are altruistic, and prepared to give their lives to their country—Ireland.

From the Sinn Fein Headquarters I walked a couple of hundred yards to lunch with an Ulster friend of profound learning. His library is one of the best stocked I have found in any part of the British Empire. His view is that given five years Sinn Feinism will die a natural death. That what Ireland wants for the next forty or fifty years is firm government. That Dominion Home Rule for Ireland is out of the question. That there is no solution to the Irish question at the present time. That Ulster has little in common with the rest of Ireland, and her one desire is to draw closer to the United Kingdom.

Here, then, are the two extremes of Irish opinion. Was ever statesmanship confronted with a more perplexing problem?\*

I concluded my article by stating that the Irish Convention had come nearer to finding a way out of the impasse than most people realised and I re-affirmed my conviction that a British Commonwealth, which had enabled Canada, Australia and South Africa to become loyal partner-states, could yet make a settlement with Southern Ireland on similar lines.

In 1919 I advocated the immediate granting of Dominion status to Ireland, excluding Ulster; the six Ulster counties to have the power to vote themselves into the Irish Dominion when they desired to do so. I considered that "green" Ireland must also recognise "orange" Ireland's right to self-determination.

In August, 1919, I was convinced that an Irish settlement was possible. Looking back on the situation after sixteen years I am still of that opinion, though I admit that there was subsequently an inflexibility of mind on both sides of the channel that I had not anticipated. I have never been able to understand how it was that Mr. Lloyd George with his great gifts of conciliation failed so lamentably in his handling of Ireland—not that I underestimate his difficulties.

\* *Daily Mail*, January, 1919.

During the fortnight in Ireland I saw much of a cousin by marriage, Leslie Edmunds, employed by the Congested Districts Board. We used to go bathing together and we went for long walks in the mountains at the back of Killiney Bay. Edmunds was the best type of Empire-builder. He was a great athlete and had been one of the pioneers in Rhodesia. Over six foot three in his stockings, he was a demon for work and as soon as he came to live in Ireland he threw himself with infectious enthusiasm into his job in the congested districts of Connemara. During our walks we discussed Ireland's woes. He was not prepared to go as far as I was in meeting the Irish demand for self-government. He under-estimated the intensity of the Irish yearning for control of their country. He could not believe that the majority of Southern Irishmen would ever be misguided enough to wish to withdraw from the British Empire.

Within a year poor Leslie was ambushed and shot by an assassin's bullet. It was difficult not to let one's judgment of Ireland's case be influenced by detestable outrages like this. But in 1919 I did not think my fellow countrymen would descend to such methods.

Killacونا, Ballybrack,  
Co. Dublin.

10 August, 1919.

I quite enjoyed the drive from Kingstown Harbour in our open victoria in the freshness of a lovely summer morning.

11 August, 1919.

On the pavement outside my bedroom there is some sweet alyssum, it has grown out of the cracks of the asphalt. I lunched in Dublin with F. at the Kildare Street Club. Lord Plunket was there. Wasn't it nice of him, he came up to me and said, "I want to tell you how much I enjoy reading *Overseas*. I read every word of it from cover to cover and I think it gets better every issue."

Came back by the 4 o'clock train and met Leslie Edmunds, who asked me to go and bathe with him so we went down to the shore wearing white flannels. I think the last time I wore them was three years ago in the summer at Sidmouth. I found a little piece of paper which had lain there all that time. How much has

happened since then. I got involved in an argument with Leslie Edmunds on Nationalism!

Tuesday, 12 August, 1919.

It was quite fresh sitting in the tent, where Mother spends all her time, as both sides are open. It means that we spend practically the whole day out of doors.\*

16 August, 1919.

Bicycled over to see Horace Plunkett, four miles. He was very friendly and I was much interested in talking to him and we discussed the whole Irish situation. Of course he has travelled so much that he has got a broad outlook, only I wish he was a little bit stronger, not only physically but more forceful as a man. If he had been I believe he could have almost carried the Irish Convention with him. (*Letters.*)

I used greatly to look forward to my talks with Horace Plunkett on the Irish question at his delightful home under the shadow of the Dublin mountains at Foxrock. I have the happiest memories of playing "golf" on his nine-hole course cunningly laid out in his garden. I do not think that the holes were more than 30-50 yards apart and we only took two clubs, a niblick and a putter, but some of them provided sporting tee shots aiming at blind holes. Negotiating rhododendron bushes and arbutus on the way while discussing the Irish question required the nerves of Hagen or Bobby Jones! Horace Plunkett was one of the few Irish men among my friends who knew America intimately and had my outlook on British-American relations. It was balm to my soul to talk to him on the supreme need for promoting English-speaking friendship. He was one of my earliest members in the English-Speaking Union. I entirely sympathised with the policy of his Irish Dominion League.

T. P. O'Connor once wrote me an article for *Overseas* about Horace Plunkett in which he said, "no man worked harder at the Convention, but the stern facts were too strong for him." Perhaps they were, perhaps I am over-estimat-

\* My mother had for many years led an invalid life and in the summer used to spend all her days in a tent in our garden.

ing what any one man could have done. He had not the requisite stamina for a creator of a new country. He lacked the drive of a Masaryk or a Mussolini. Indeed he was practically a chronic invalid and only prolonged his life by careful diet, by sleeping out-of-doors and by treatment at the great Battle Creek Sanatorium in America. He had a deep devotion to Ireland. Few Irish leaders were worse speakers than Horace Plunkett. T. P. O'Connor thus described one of his speeches before the Irish Fellowship Club at Liverpool: "His speech had all his characteristic defects. He spoke slowly, almost stammeringly—he paused often to find the exact word, and there was not a bit of colour, not a phrase of passion in the whole address. Yet the fact remains that I have rarely heard an address which produced so profound an effect."

Many tragedies were enacted in Ireland during the Anglo-Irish conflict subsequently, but nothing more incomprehensible than the burning down of Horace Plunkett's lovely home at Foxrock. Few Irishmen have given more practical service to Ireland than Horace Plunkett. Well may Irishmen hang their heads in shame when they think of this episode!

. . . . .

I had long wanted to meet Arthur Griffith, the founder of Sinn Féin, and to ascertain if there was anything incompatible between Sinn Féin idealism and Dominion status. I had made several unsuccessful attempts to see him on previous occasions. During my visit to Ireland in August, 1919, I was informed that Griffith would be willing to have a talk. I suggested that if possible a conversation between Griffith and two of the leaders of the Southern Unionists would be desirable. My father arranged with Mr. Andrew Jameson, former governor of the Bank of Ireland, and Sir Harry Greer, the sportsman and director of the National Stud, to represent Southern Unionism at an informal and private discussion. The meeting took place at Ballsbridge in one of the Committee rooms of the Royal Dublin

Society—neutral ground. There were present Arthur Griffith and a Mr. Lawlor, representing Sinn Fein, the two Southern Unionists, my father and myself. Owing to his official position my father took no part in the discussions, which were left primarily to Arthur Griffith and myself because the matter under discussion was Dominion status, upon which I was specially qualified to speak.

For nearly three hours we talked. There was no aspect of Dominion nationalism nor of the relationship of a free state within the British Commonwealth to the Empire as a whole we did not discuss. Our survey ranged over Europe and America and we talked of Hungary's pre-war relationship to Austria, of the dual Austro-Hungarian monarchy and of Cuba's special position towards the United States.

Arthur Griffith, a printer by trade, was sincere, honest and likeable, but a tired man. He had evidently thought much about his subject. He had not that fanatical something to be found in many national leaders. I was agreeably surprised. I was convinced that if I had had the backing of the British Government I could have come to terms with him. I wrote down on the back of an envelope the conditions that Sinn Fein would be ready to accept. They were Dominion status, the King to be King of Ireland, as Franz-Josef had been King of Hungary, Ireland to have control of her own finances and customs, the Province of Ulster to be entitled to remain outside the Irish Dominion until such a time as she voted herself, in and finally Ireland to be let off her share of the national debt.\*

In view of past events these terms seemed to me reasonable and I was convinced that the majority of the British people would have consented to them if the question had been put to them fairly. I wished I had known Mr. Lloyd George, as I was confident that I could have converted him to my way of thinking for the sake of an Irish settlement. I

\* I think Ireland was to control her own armed forces, as do the other Dominions, and that there was to be a joint foreign policy with Great Britain.



hurried back to London to report my conversations to my friend Philip Kerr, Lloyd George's secretary and adviser. Unfortunately for the sake of Anglo-Irish relations, Kerr was out of town and I only succeeded in seeing Sir William Sutherland, with whom I was unacquainted. Sutherland had not in my view the requisite gifts to enter into the other fellow's point of view. My enthusiasm began to ooze before his Scottish logic and in the correct atmosphere of Downing Street. But I was more than ever convinced of the justice of the cause I was advocating and my sympathy was with Arthur Griffith. Of the two his point of view seemed the more reasonable. The conversation was brought to a close by Sutherland saying, "You can tell your Irish friends that the British Government will never consent to let Ireland off her share of the national debt."

Disheartened I withdrew and I have never made any more attempts at Irish peacemaking! But I have often reflected on the unwisdom of those in high places. A Scotsman, presumably in the know, had said in 1919 that the British Government would never let Ireland off her share of the national debt. A year later a Welshman had said that Great Britain would never consent to Ireland having her own military forces. Such is the irony of fate that within fifteen months the British Government of which the Welshman was the head agreed to do both these things!



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# Chapter XXXII

“PUSSYFOOT”

NOVEMBER, 1919

## Chapter XXXII

### “PUSSYFOOT”

*“The restraint of the liberty of the individual to whom the use of intoxicants is enjoyable and harmless is but a slight restriction on his general freedom of action. It is something he may very well be called upon to give up to save for society those whom it depraves and destroys.”* (The late President William H. Taft in 1919. He was President of the English-Speaking Union of the United States.)

*“Let Johnson alone . . . more power to his elbow.”*

(President Theodore Roosevelt.)

*“A very important landmark in the history of democratic government was passed when 36 out of the 49 States of the American Union recorded their votes in favour of National Prohibition. . . . Here is an object lesson which may indeed encourage the social reformer. A great democracy—the largest in the world—has definitely affirmed its belief that the drink traffic is anti-social and therefore must go.”*

(Landmark, February, 1919.)

WHEN America went “dry” I was profoundly impressed. Before the war I had seen the squalor and suffering caused by drink in our industrial cities. When I undertook slum visiting for a philanthropic society in 1910 in London I had been horrified by the devastation wrought by drink. The lives of entire families were blighted because the wage-earner spent all his earnings in the nearest “pub.” In the United States I had seen the evil caused by the saloon. Weighing the pros and cons of prohibition, although not a teetotaler myself, I agreed with Mr. Taft. I considered the loss of personal liberty entailed was a small price to pay for the sake of a higher standard of well-being all round. I had been much struck by the high level of prosperity I had seen in “dry” states in America: I knew how strong was the “dry” sentiment in Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

I had seen something of the prosperity of the American Middle-West—where the wage-earner brought home his

earnings and spent them in his home. European friends were surprised at the wonderful physique of the American "doughboy." I knew that it was partly owing to the healthier environment and fewer opportunities of obtaining strong drink. Every time I returned from North America and walked through the working-class districts of Dublin, Glasgow, Liverpool or London I shuddered. Naturally I did not attribute all the sordid sights I saw to drink, but I knew—as every social reformer knows—that drink was one of our major problems.

With few exceptions my American and Canadian friends in 1918-19 were advocates of Prohibition. They gave me reports to read from the leading industrialists on the North American continent who stated that there was much greater efficiency among their workpeople when removed from the temptation of liquor and a much higher standard of living. It was only necessary to compare the homes of the workers in "dry" and "wet" districts to become convinced of the benefits of Prohibition. When I was in America in 1920 I talked with leading industrialists and business men in Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Chicago, Minneapolis, Cleveland and Boston and I found they were overwhelmingly in favour of National Prohibition.

If the workers could have indulged in their pleasures in moderation and sipped their iced beer and light wines in open-air cafés as they did on the continent of Europe I would not have advocated Prohibition. But I feared there was something in the Anglo-Saxon make-up that necessitated drastic measures. For several years I became a warm advocate of Prohibition. Just as the motorist had to submit to restrictions and as the ordinary citizen had to be protected from himself, so a further interference with personal liberty became necessary for the general good. I realise now that I entirely under-estimated the evils that Prohibition brought in its train such as an entire disregard for law, smuggling, illicit drink shops and boot-legging. The best way of fighting the evil of drunkenness is to reform the public-house, to serve food with





Mr. W. E. Johnson, "Pussyfoot."

drink in pleasant surroundings, above all to give the people better housing conditions. I am still of the opinion that there should be public ownership of the drink trade. In my view the country which deals with the drink problem in the most effective way is Sweden. The system in force there has neither the drawbacks of Prohibition nor of private ownership.

To return to the autumn of 1919. At the Overseas Club, as part of the mental fare we provided for our members, I used to arrange discussions and debates on current problems. I had met Mr. W. E. Johnson (“Pussyfoot”) on several occasions and he had become a member of the English-Speaking Union. I resented some of the attacks which were being made on him in the British Press and I asked him if he would consent to take part in a debate on the pros and cons of Prohibition with a representative of the Anti-Prohibition League. Mr. Johnson consented and Mr. R. Mitchell Banks agreed to represent the Anti-Prohibitionists. Such was the demand for tickets that I decided to take the Essex Hall, in Essex Street, close to the Overseas Club’s premises.

The meeting took place on Thursday, 13 November, 1919, and I asked my friend Mr. F. A. MacKenzie to take the chair. I was quite ignorant that any trouble was brewing but apparently London newspapers anticipated lively events because flashlight photographers were mounted on vantage points in Essex Street. In retrospect I realise that some kind of demonstration was likely because a certain section of the Press had lost no opportunity of attacking Pussyfoot’s campaign as a meddlesome interference from abroad with Britain’s internal problems—“this sinister attempt to deprive the British working man of his beer”, to use the words of Mr. Horatio Bottomley. In *John Bull* these lines appeared :

“Pussyfoot, Pussyfoot waits on the sly  
To turn on the tap till the barrel runs “dry,”  
But Pussy will find it a difficult task,  
For the Bulldog is keeping an eye on the cask.”



It is always easy to raise the bogey of foreign interference at moments of national excitement. In the abolition of slavery campaign in Massachusetts in 1834, George Thompson, a young Englishman, who had been invited by William Lloyd Garrison to come to America to advocate the cause of abolition, addressed two hundred anti-slavery meetings. Finally he had to fly for his life when the Boston crowd broke up a big meeting he was to have addressed on 14 October, 1835. On that occasion the American Press used arguments about "the interfering Englishman."

Prior to an interview granted by Mr. W. E. Johnson to Mr. Ferdinand Tuohy, and printed in the *Daily Mail* in July, 1919, Prohibition was not a live issue in Great Britain. Almost within twenty-four hours the situation changed. In a vividly written article Mr. Tuohy described "Pussyfoot" as "the Field-Marshal of the Prohibition Forces of North America, who is reported to have done more to make the United States 'dry' than any other single man." The object of Mr. Johnson's sojourn among us was thus described :

Mr. "Pussyfoot" Johnson is to-day established in commodious Fleet Street offices. He is a stout, heavy-featured, bespectacled man with the gentlest, almost inaudible, pleasantly-modulated voice. He first made Oklahoma "dry"—it took him ten years—then Kansas, then largely the United States. Now he has come over to make this country "dry."

The Anti-Saloon League, an organisation that it would be infantile to scoff at, has sent its best man to this country. It has sent him with *carte blanche* in strategy, tactics and finance. The others are coming, "large numbers of men and women experts, including Mr. Bryan"; meanwhile Mr. "Pussyfoot" Johnson is inaudibly, invisibly clearing the field for action.

After reading this article the British public became alarmed. They had visions of an army of spell-binders stumping the country. The Anti-Prohibition forces saw their opportunity. Mr. Johnson sought to counteract the impression given by the interview in the *Daily Mail*. In the *Manchester Guardian* he stated :

Neither I myself nor the Anti-Saloon League has had the slightest intention of interfering in any way with British affairs. We will not take any part whatever in any British elections.

Of no avail. The fat was in the fire.

Outside Essex Hall there was an electric atmosphere. The street was crowded with young men. Apparently students from King's and University Colleges were determined to put London University “on the map.” They had, it seems, decided to seize “Pussyfoot” and make him the object of a good “rag,” with of course no intention of hurting him. But when F. A. MacKenzie and I elbowed our way into the meeting hall we were blissfully ignorant of their intentions. Students in military formation marched down Essex Street—I learnt afterwards—and whiled away the time by singing the refrain:

“Pussyfoot, Pussyfoot, we want Pussyfoot,  
Bart's wants Pussyfoot;  
Guy's wants Pussyfoot;  
We all want Pussyfoot.  
Pussyfoot!”

As Mr. Johnson, Mr. Mitchell Banks, Mr. F. A. MacKenzie and I mounted the platform we were greeted with catcalls and shouts of “What won the war? Beer!” I announced that Mr. F. A. MacKenzie would take the chair. There were roars, “We want ‘Pussyfoot’.” Mr. MacKenzie tried to address the meeting. He was shouted down. I then appealed to our members, who composed half the audience, to give our guests a fair hearing. I was shouted down by the students. I then had to leave the meeting as I was already late for an important meeting of the English-Speaking Union. As I left there was a temporary lull and Mr. MacKenzie seemed to have matters in hand. The last thing I heard was a student, dressed as a stage Irishman, who was enthusiastically greeted shouting, “We don't want Americans coming over here with elaborate and ornate speeches, telling us what we ought to do. We won the Battle of the Somme on rum

and rum only, and the sooner Mr. Johnson realises that the better."

Mr. MacKenzie wrote\*: "Mr. Banks, the Anti-Prohibitionist, now asked for fair play for his opponent. Then Johnson himself stepped to the front, quiet, smiling and looking, as the reporters next day said, as cherubic as Mr. Pickwick."

At a given signal, the students who had rushed the hall, hurled bags of flour at the speaker. Chairs were smashed and tables overturned. There was a rush at "Pussyfoot," who put up a fight with his fists, his back to the wall. Blinded by flour he was seized by the students, as was the Chairman, Mr. MacKenzie. After the tumult had died down Mr. Banks said, "I hope you will take my word that I knew nothing of this disgraceful scene. I repudiate it. I propose to you that we pass a vote of condolence with Mr. Johnson on the unfair and rough handling he has received."

The students carried their captives in triumph to the yard of King's College. Here "Pussyfoot" was offered beer which he refused. He now realised that the whole affair was a "rag" and entered into the spirit of the proceedings. "Pussyfoot," his clothes covered with flour, was placed on a stretcher and taken by the students in a triumphal procession, marching slowly through Piccadilly Circus to Oxford Street. At Oxford Circus police reserves arrived on the scene. They manœuvred in such a fashion that they cut off the section with Johnson from the rest of the procession. Then the police made a rush and bore him away from his captors. A motor-car was nearby and they hurried him into it. Up to now the affair had been nothing more than a "rag."

Let Mr. MacKenzie complete the story :

At the last moment the "rag" took a more serious turn. Someone on the outside of the crowd—the students declared that it was none of them—threw a stone which caught Johnson full on

\* 'Pussyfoot' Johnson. Hodder & Stoughton, 1920.

the ball of his right eye. The police took him quickly off to Bow Street station, where a surgeon attended to his injury.

Heavily bandaged he returned home and said to the reporters, “Tell the boys there is no ill-will on my side—not a grain.”

There was a great revulsion of feeling in Mr. Johnson’s favour. Messages of condolence poured in upon him. The Chairman of the Wine and Spirit Trade Defence Fund wrote saying, “we entirely deprecate anything which is not fair play.” I was deeply concerned that Mr. Johnson’s acceptance of my invitation to address an Overseas Club meeting should have ended so disastrously. But Mr. Johnson was great in his misfortune.\* He did not regret the loss of his eye. His misfortune had advanced the ideals for which he worked. At the large meeting tendered him subsequently at the Central Hall, Westminster, he said, “So far as the affair in Essex Hall is concerned I do not intend to grieve about that. The benefits which I believe have accrued to the cause we have at heart more than outweigh my sense of personal injury through the loss of an eye.”

While I did not share Mr. Johnson’s optimism that England would be “dry” by 1930, I was convinced in 1919 that sooner or later the whole English-speaking world would follow the example of the United States. So little can we foresee coming events.

In the *Star* two days after the meeting I wrote :

Surely the great body of London students cannot regard their exploit with much satisfaction. To refuse the right of free speech is neither clever nor should it be tolerated in the twentieth century. . . . If they wish to make the *amende honorable* to Mr. Johnson, who is confined to his bed, they should invite him, when he is well, to state his case before them, and promise him a fair hearing.

\* Two weeks after the “rag” Mr. Johnson’s eye had to be removed.

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## Chapter XXXIII

THE UNITED STATES IN 1920

WESTWARD BOUND!—WITH MY AMERICAN FRIENDS

## Chapter XXXIII

### THE UNITED STATES IN 1920

EVER since starting the English-Speaking Union in July, 1918, I had eagerly looked forward to revisiting America and assisting in the task of organising our American sister-society. Originally I had hoped to go in 1919 but there was still the anxious task of putting the finances of the British society in a healthy state before tackling so difficult a job. Early in 1920 most of my immediate financial problems were solved. We were able to move from our inadequate premises in Lennox House, Howard Street, Strand, to a delightful suite of rooms in Trafalgar Buildings, Trafalgar Square, at the corner of Northumberland Avenue and Whitehall, opposite the Admiralty Arch. It is one of the best sites in London and our tea-parties in honour of American visitors became very popular.

My financial worries were lifted once again by my "fairy godfather," Alexander Smith Cochran, and I was able to go ahead with the planning of my American tour with an easy mind.

Cochran's help was entirely unexpected. This letter to my parents tells the story :

. . . My chief excitement this week was a wonderful piece of good luck. I dined with Cochran on Sunday and we parted very warmly and he said he would look out for me in New York. I never mentioned the question of finance as I thought it would be wiser not to, unless he volunteered, which he didn't!

On Monday the finances of the E.-S.U. were rather weighing on me as we were sailing too close to the wind and I kept wondering whom I should try next. Well on Tuesday morning I found a letter from Cochran enclosing a cheque for \$4,000 (£1,179 at present rate of exchange) with his best wishes. But it is entirely due to Hylda that I have got it.

Without saying a word to me about it she wrote Cochran such a nice letter—she showed me a copy afterwards—telling him how

worried I was and how the entire financial responsibility fell on my shoulders and if he could come to the rescue what a help it would be. Well, he wrote her a charming letter saying that "Evelyn seemed so cheerful, etc." that he had no idea I wanted help and was so grateful to her for letting him know. You can imagine what I felt about it and I am so glad now that Hylda had met him a year ago.

This means that I shall have no more financial worries as regards the E.-S.U. this year. We moved into our new quarters—Trafalgar Buildings, Trafalgar Square, last week and the office part is ready. The reading and writing room will be finished in a couple of weeks.

I have got Lawrence of Arabia lunching with me to-day which ought to be interesting.

My presence was urgently needed in America and the provisional New York committee was going through troublous times. There was violent antagonism between two of the most forceful personalities on the committee. I was afraid that the whole cause would collapse in America owing to these internal feuds. Mr. Taft was so disturbed by the rumours that reached him that he resigned as national president and Dr. Judson of Chicago University likewise withdrew his support.

Friends wrote imploring me to come over: I alone—as founder—had the necessary authority to reconstitute the movement and make a fresh start. Till Cochran's timely gift arrived I did not feel justified in charging the expenses of my trip—£300—to the organisation. The money I had collected in London was definitely for our new premises and development work in Great Britain. Cochran's generosity meant that I could now go to America with a clear conscience. I liked to feel that my visit was made possible by American money—and above all money from an old friend, who had helped me through a very anxious period in the history of the Overseas League.

I considered Cochran's help a good omen. At the same time I did not under-estimate the difficulties. Frictionmongers were at work in the United States—German, Irish and certain others with "the ancient grudge" complex against Great Britain. After the war-

time friendship existing between our two peoples there had come the inevitable reaction. Any interference by an Englishman\* in the affairs of an American organisation would be resented. I would have to walk warily. In view of the official position I had held in the Ministry of Information I was a marked man. The Irish Republican Brotherhood and Fenian emissaries made attacks on me, as the representative of the "hidden hand of British propaganda."

There was much talk about hyphenated Americanism in the post-war era. Uncle Sam had no place for citizens with a dual allegiance. Above all the Englishman was suspect. Irish-American 100 per cent. patriots made the blood of poor unsuspecting Americans run cold by accounts of the sinister attempts being made to entice the United States—unversed in the tricks of old-world political intrigue—back into the folds of the British Empire! In business matters Uncle Sam could hold his own, but in the realm of diplomacy he was no match for the secret emissaries of Downing Street. It was only the immigrant Irishman, whose forbears had suffered for seven hundred years under the cruel yoke of Dublin Castle, who understood the depths of guile of which John Bull was capable.

Extracts from letters written in the months before I set out for America are given :

*Sunday, 27 October, 1919.* I have had another very full week and have been hob-nobbing with all manner of men from prize-fight promoters to the leaders of the nonconformist conscience! On Tuesday I lunched with "Jimmy" White, who belongs to the first category, and extracted £100 a year for three years from him for the E.-S.U. He is quite a nice little man without an "H" but lots of money. On the wall is a cheque for £2,500,000—one of his large deals. The day previous I had lunched with Dr. Archibald Fleming, the minister of the Scottish Church in London, and the following I took part in a welcome to ten of the leading religious preachers and lecturers of America who are over here.

\* The fact that I am half Irish was very useful on this, as on previous visits to the United States.



*Sunday, 23 November, 1919.* I lunched quietly with John Astor on Monday at the Carlton. I like him very much, he has high ideals and is absolutely unspoilt and not a bit out for himself. You know his father has left him Hever Castle in Kent, which is a wonderful place. He is getting quite interested in the E.-S.U. and turned up at our Committee meeting on Thursday.

Massingham, the man who is carrying on the campaign against the trade in the sale of egret feathers, came to see me and I am going to help him all I can, it is disgraceful that we should allow such a thing.

*29 November, 1919.* I am delighted that Lady Astor has got into Parliament.

*Sunday, 7 December, 1919.* I saw a very terrible thing on Tuesday morning. It was after breakfast and I had been reading my papers and was just getting ready to go to the office, when I heard a crash so I opened the window and looked out. There, immediately below on the pavement exactly opposite the door through which I go out every morning, was a poor man who had been knocked down by one of the chimneys in this building which had been blown by a hurricane of wind into the street. Half the poor fellow's face had been taken away.

With all these Sinn Fein raids going on I do hope you have taken your (F.'s) guns and cartridges to the bank or some safe place, but I think you told me you had done so.

*Sunday, 21 December, 1919.* I am very sorry to see that there has been an attempt on Lord French's life and am very glad that he escaped, but I am not surprised and I fear there will be many more outrages.

The Chief rang me up one morning to discuss Irish matters. He is much exercised about Russia.

*Sunday, 18 January, 1920.* . . . I have had two talks with Wickham Steed who wants me to help him to organise an Anti-Bolshevist League, but I have told him I have my hands full elsewhere. I expect to go over to America for a month in April to straighten out E.-S.U. problems there.

On Friday Lord Hugh Cecil lunched with me at the Marlborough Club to discuss his Flying Corps Memorial and I ended up the week with a two-hour talk with Lionel Curtis.

*Sunday, 8 February, 1920.* I have definitely booked my passage on the *Carmania* sailing from Liverpool on March 23rd.

*Sunday, 15 February, 1920.* One day last week I lunched with Norman Angell and found him full of interest. By degrees he is coming into his own and people are realising that in all his main points he was right in *The Great Illusion*.

On Friday Sir William Tyrrell lunched with me and gave me a most interesting account of their time at Washington and all the wheels within wheels. He is a very wise little man and I do not think Lord Grey could have a better adviser.

I hear from friends that President Wilson will never forgive Lord Grey for his letter, which has had the most excellent effect.\*

*Sunday, 29 February, 1920.* Lawrence of Arabia lunched with me alone last Monday. He is such a quiet unassuming person with blue eyes which look right through one. He hates publicity and is now writing a history of the Crusades which he thinks will take him five years and then he expects to write a book on Spinoza! I had a long talk to him about Middle-East problems and was gratified to find that in many matters he and I saw eye to eye.

*Saturday, 6 March, 1920.* I am beginning to collect letters of introduction, etc., for my American visit and I think my only trouble will be too much hospitality.

On Tuesday evening I got Campbell Stuart to dine with me to meet T. E. Lawrence to discuss the *Times* policy on Eastern questions. It was most interesting and C.S. was much impressed by Lawrence, who arrived at the "Marlborough" just in his evening things and with no overcoat or hat! One can do these things if one is the "uncrowned King of Arabia."

One evening I went round to see Reading to arrange further details about Rothermere's gift of £20,000 to found the Chair of American History in Oxford University—I think it will do a lot of good.

(*Letters to Parents.*)

It made me very happy to think that just before my tour I had been the agent selected by Rothermere to carry out his purpose of endowing a Chair of American History at Oxford. In the *Landmark* for August, 1920, I wrote:

Lord Rothermere's generous gift of £20,000 to endow a Chair of American History at Oxford University is most welcome. For Lord Rothermere has shown that in Great Britain we are

\*This was the letter Lord Grey of Fallodon wrote to *The Times* explaining why the United States would not come into the League of Nations.

realising more and more a defect in our University education, namely the inadequate teaching of American history. Many of us left school or college twenty years ago with none but the scantiest knowledge of American history subsequent to the rebellion of the colonies.

To the members of the English-Speaking Union, Lord Rothermere's generosity has a special interest. For it was to the writer that he first announced his intention of endowing the Chair at Oxford in memory of his son Vyvyan Harmsworth, who was killed in the war, and it was my good fortune to be the bearer of the offer to Oxford from Lord Rothermere to Lord Reading, our chairman, who approached Lord Curzon, the Chancellor of Oxford University. In telling me of his decision Lord Rothermere informed me that he first conceived the idea from some remarks of mine in an earlier issue of this journal. Lord Rothermere first told me of his intention in the autumn of last year.

### WESTWARD BOUND

My last westward trip across the Atlantic had been on the *Mauretania* in May, 1912, when I was setting out on my Empire crusade and the voyage had lasted five days. On this occasion I crossed in the more sedate *Carmania* and the voyage took just under twelve days.

*Carmania*, 27 March, 1920. I am sitting next Wiseman\* at the Captain's table. My fellow cabin-mate is a Captain in the Canadian Army, such a nice fellow. My last view of Liverpool was of hundreds of little people waving handkerchiefs from the landing-stage. I have had many talks to Wiseman and have heard about his war experiences and the part he played as liaison officer with Colonel House. His brother-in-law was one of the "Bush Brothers" whom I met in Queensland.

*Later.* Very rough to-day, but bright sunshine and the sea a deep blue with porpoises plunging in and out of the water. My first ocean voyage since my return from South Africa in 1913!

I love "your" Mrs. Browning, especially the time she was in bed at Wimpole Street and he was wooing her, but I am disappointed in her afterwards in Italy. . . . I have been thinking of our talk

\* Sir William Wiseman, who acted as liaison officer between the British Government and President Wilson during the war. Colonel House had a deep friendship for Wiseman.

on Wimbledon Common by the Queensmere the other day on the subject of Faith. I am certain you are right. The only thing to do when the torch burns but dimly is to throw one's whole weight on the side of Faith and to govern one's life as if one *had* a burning Faith and leave searchings and questionings on one side and then the Faith will return in moments of insight.

*Carmania*, 29 March. There is a black American Army officer with a practically white wife and little half-caste child. I feel very sorry for him and want to talk to him.

1 April. Before going to bed and after breakfast I paced the deck for an hour and then talked to a man who I think will be of use to the E.-S.U. I feel I ought to try and organise a meeting on board, but I feel diffident.

2 April. The sea is raging outside and there is a blizzard and the wind is howling. It has turned bitterly cold, it has been too cold to sit on deck this afternoon, so with the help of a friend I carried on a campaign for the E.-S.U. and enrolled ten members. We are having the worst weather since leaving England; there is a real blizzard, blinding sleet and howling wind with the waves dashing right over the ship.

Thanks to Mothersill I never miss a meal! At dinner it was quite difficult to keep one's food on the plate despite the fiddles. My overcoat and the curtain of my cabin door keep hanging out at impossible angles from the wall as I write.

*Carmania*, 3 April. Total members of the E.-S.U. enrolled now 23.

5 April, *Carmania* at Halifax, Nova Scotia. I was told Captain de Carteret\* was looking for me. I went ashore with him and was taken round to see various overseas members and then we ended up at the Club where I was given lunch by the Lieutenant-Governor. I had to speak and then had to rush back to catch the boat. It is eleven years since I was last in Nova Scotia.

*At Sea*, 5 April. It is foggy outside and the fog-horn has been going all night.

Had my English-Speaking Union meeting in the smoking room. It was rather a difficult audience but I warmed up and got six more members and one life member (£25) as a result—my total bag is now 31. I kept thinking of the last time I crossed the Atlantic

\* Honorary Corresponding Secretary of the Overseas League.

before the war when I had that large Overseas Club meeting on the *Mauretania* in 1912. I little thought then that within six years I should have started another movement!

*At Sea, 6 April.* We have had a bad storm, by far the worst we have had since leaving Liverpool, and the wind and the sea have been raging. I went and stood right under the bridge and watched the waves coming over the ship. She is pitching and tossing so, it is inconceivable how a huge boat like this can be thrown about. I can't imagine why the ship does not break in two, she's quivering all over.

*Carmania, Evening, 7 April, 1919.* We are actually in New York harbour. It is eight years since I passed the statue of Liberty! We are not going to be allowed to land till to-morrow morning. As we came into the harbour it was snowing and is bitterly cold.

### WITH MY AMERICAN FRIENDS

*I believe it is the sincere wish of United America to have nothing to do with political intrigues or the squabbles of European nations, but on the contrary to exchange commodities in peace and amity with all the inhabitants of the earth.*

(G. WASHINGTON to the Earl of Buchan, Philadelphia, 22 April, 1793.)

As we lay on the peaceful waters of New York harbour after our stormy voyage south from Halifax, I thought with apprehension of the six weeks' trip ahead of me. I recalled similar sensations before landing in Australia and South Africa on my Empire tour, only on this occasion there was the new problem of organising under a foreign flag—although I never felt a foreigner in the United States—and the additional worry of local dissension. Why was it that individuals permitted personal likes and dislikes to wreck a great cause? I feared that perhaps after all circumstances would be too strong for me and that I should have to re-embark defeated and be obliged to leave the American members of the English-Speaking Union to work out their own destiny. On the other hand the

knowledge that I had now a chain of friends—mostly dating from 1918—scattered across the continent was reassuring. I was convinced they would help me in my difficulties.

The mood of America in the spring of 1920 was distinctly isolationist. I recalled the contents of Washington's letter which I have reprinted at the head of this section of my book. Washington evidently understood his countrymen. The predominant impression I received on this visit was America's determination to withdraw from all European commitments. There was a marked dislike of President Wilson. Almost everyone I met—apart from a few personal friends of Mr. Wilson's—criticised the President and his administration. "Why had the President gone to Europe, why had he allowed himself to be fooled by those wily European leaders such as Clemenceau and Lloyd George?" "If he had to go to Europe why hadn't he taken some trusted representative of the Republican Party, such as ex-President Taft or Senator Root?" "How could he have consented to the creation of a League of Nations in which the British Empire would have six votes to America's one?" And so on. I began to be apprehensive about peace in Europe as America was evidently going to cut the painter. The next impression was of the popularity of Prohibition. American industry—now that the drink evil was eliminated—was about to embark on an undreamt era of prosperity in the export field.

Finally there was considerable resentment at Europe's lack of recognition of the war effort of the United States. America was the one nation that had entered the war solely for ideal motives, she was the one country that had sought no personal advantage. She had suffered 300,000 casualties, had contracted a large debt and had disorganised her national life. She asked for neither colonies nor indemnity. She wanted nothing save the defeat of militarism. She had expected at least a modicum of gratitude from Europe, instead she got abuse. Very well, she would leave Europe to disentangle itself from its

problems without her help. Never again would an American "doughboy" cross the Atlantic to pick the chestnuts out of the fire for European nations. "No Sir, not on your life!" As for the League of Nations, it was only an ingenious device to compel other countries and especially the United States to maintain the integrity of the British Empire and to safeguard France's enormous oversea possessions.

The changed feeling towards France was very marked. During four visits to America in pre-war days idealisation of France was pronounced. Distance had lent enchantment. America's recent first-hand contact with Europe had dispelled many illusions. Among them the French "myth." France was not peopled by a nation of Lafayettes. France had extracted the last sou from the American nation in 1917-18.

The United States would certainly have nothing to do with the League. I recalled some verses\* Owen Wister had composed on the Atlantic a year previously and had sent to me in a letter. I only hoped the American people shared his views as to co-operation with the British Empire:

#### THE LEAGUE GAME

The Sultan of the West  
 In convention he spoke thus :  
 May I not suggest that we need a rest  
 From Ostend to the Bosphorus ?  
 Now Freedom I proclaim,  
 This day shall end all War.  
 With noun and verb mankind I'll curb—  
 It has never been done before,  
 My twenty-six articles smash into particles  
 Hatred, Envy and Spite.  
 We'll get along swimmin' and even the women  
 Will be too proud to fight.

\* Last year (13 July, 1934) Mr. Owen Wister wrote to me, "The doggerel had been forgotten wholly; and I am glad to possess it and very glad that you should include it in your book . . . and likewise to find that I am of the same opinion as to the doggerel's sentiments."

The Allies thus addressed  
 To the Sultan made reply :  
 If you think that you can cure the passions of men  
 By syntax, please do try.  
 Melt down each sword to a pen,  
 With the pen deal a glorious stroke ;  
 Much blood has been shed, many people are dead,  
 And the rest of us mostly broke.  
 Smash war into particles by twenty-six articles  
 Which you must now indite.  
 We'll get along swimmin' and even the women  
 Will be too proud to fight.

Of Universal Peace  
 They made an Accomplished Fact,  
 In verbal maze and reversible phrase  
 They highly did contract.  
 To grasp this Document  
 The Lion lay down with the Lamb ;  
 In various ways for days and days  
 They reduced the thing to jam.  
 The twenty-six articles smashed brains into particles  
 And the Sultan cried in delight :  
 This thing'll go swimmin' and even the women  
 Will be too confused to fight.

To John Bull, Uncle Sam  
 One morning he said, Hark :  
 This world's in a mess and I am, I confess,  
 Very sadly in the dark.  
 I feel like speaking plain,  
 To you, John Bull, at least ;  
 Can you play a league game with no nation the same  
 In North, South, West, or East ?  
 They'll smash to particles these twenty-six articles  
 But if you and I sit tight  
 Some things may go swimmin' and some men and women  
 May think twice before they fight. O.W.

Written on s.s. *Celtic*, 1-10 April, 1919.

11, *East Street*, New York, 9 April, 1919. Driggs\* of the Flying Club was at landing stage which made me feel at home

\* Mr. Laurence L. Driggs, President of the American Flying Club.



straight away and we drove here. There were 50 or 60 letters and telegrams to greet me from my American friends.

From the moment I arrived the telephone began ringing, including long-distance calls. Their long-distance service is amazing—so much better than ours. Old Putnam\* was one of my first callers and grasped me warmly with both hands.

Various private E.-S.U. members have been to see me to tell me of the position and fighting that has been going on, which I have to straighten out. The situation is no worse than I expected and I feel perfectly capable of dealing with it. It is nothing like the disappointment that faced me on my O.S. tour when I arrived in New Zealand.

*Later.* Have just had two hours with one of the most difficult members of the Committee, then a long talk with Putnam. . . .

The chief changes I notice in New York are the increase in skyscrapers and the growth in the motor traffic. There is an unending stream of luxurious cars on Fifth Avenue.

10 *April, New York.* Had to switch over from E.-S.U. to Overseas Club to-day! Was given dinner by latter last night. Very cordial gathering about 100. New British Consul-General† was there. He was very friendly, was born in Ulster and knew Father. After dinner they presented me with cheque for 300 dollars for Overseas War Memorial. Altogether I had nice warm feeling.

11 *April, 1919, New York.* As I was beginning to despair about my correspondence went round to Commodore Hotel and dictated 53 letters to an attractive and efficient blonde stenographer direct on to the machine. She was a real expert and I have never seen hands race over the keyboard like that and never a mistake. My three hours' dictation cost me £3 but was well worth it!

13 *April.* To see Ivy Lee in his 31st storey office down town, with such a view over the harbour. It must be easy to generate ideas with that outlook. . . . Had tea with Arthur Willert,‡ Washington correspondent of *Times*, who was at Summer Fields with me.

13 *April, 1919, Bellevue Stratford, Philadelphia, Pa.* Was given lunch before leaving New York by Paul Cravath, a very important

\* Major George Haven Putnam.

† Sir H. Gloster Armstrong.

‡ Subsequently Sir Arthur Willert, in charge Press Department of Foreign Office.

man. He had got a group of leading men to meet me. I hope to get them to take up the English-Speaking Union on my return when I have straightened things out. This is the first time I begin to see daylight. . . . Rather worried as my baggage has not arrived. That is the only drawback to American system of checking baggage.

*Later.* Baggage arrived so I was just able to scramble into dinner jacket. Was taken to see Russian Ballet by Fullerton Waldo of *Philadelphia Ledger*. He was one of my guests at original E.-S.U. dinner at the Marlborough on 28 June, 1918.

14 *April, Philadelphia.* Called round to see various people the American Ambassador had given me letters to. They were all very friendly and wanted to entertain me. Then to see the Mayor. On the walls of the City Hall is a prayer of William Penn's. On the top of the great tower of the City Hall is Penn's figure, which broods over the whole city and I felt very much at home thinking of Jordans. . . . A Mr. Gribbell gave me lunch at the hotel in a private room. He gave some original Burns manuscripts to Scotland some years ago and is head of the local Trans-Atlantic Society with which I want to link up. After lunch I was interviewed by reporter from the *Ledger*.

16 *April, Philadelphia.* I have just been to see Mr. Edward Bok, of the *Ladies' Home Journal* and called in at the Independence Hall where the Declaration of Independence was signed, and touched the Liberty bell. You will know some of the sensations I had. Mr. Bok was very friendly. The office of the Curtis Publishing Company is a marvellous place. We have nothing like it. Inside the great doorway is a marble vestibule with a large pool in which goldfish swim and there is a fountain with an allegorical picture of a dream city in coloured glass mosaic. I then went to see Owen Wister. Dined with Overseas League and then on to good Overseas meeting, spoke for about an hour.

17 *April, Mount Vernon Place, Baltimore.* Had a very nice dinner with my friend Frank R. Kent, editor of the *Baltimore Sun*, and two other E.-S.U. friends, and have been made to feel absolutely at home and really welcome. Since then I have had to see the reporters. It is now 10 p.m. and another reporter is waiting to see me. I think Baltimore had given me the warmest welcome I have had in America so far.

17 *April, Mount Vernon Place, Baltimore.* I am waiting for Mr. Theodore Marburg. He was formerly American Minister to

Belgium. After dictating forty letters I had to go round to see the local photographer as they wanted to take me. I was fetched by the City Club people and escorted across. It was a gathering of about three hundred and I had to speak just on an hour. It all went with a tremendous swing and I really felt I did justice to my theme. They gave me a great reception when I sat down. I had been a little bit nervous.

18 *April*. The Marburg's is a very large house in a quiet square in the centre of the town and I have got a huge room. Their kindness passes belief. Mr. Marburg escorted me to the Maryland Club, where my editor friend, Kent, gave me a terrific repast to meet the leading citizens. I had to talk for over an hour and they asked all sorts of questions about conditions in England.

Just think, Mr. Marburg first met his wife on a Wednesday and proposed to her on the following Monday, but she did not finally accept him for three months and they were married in October of that year. They are absolutely happy.

The drive through the suburbs was lovely, the Forsythia perfectly wonderful and Japanese drooping-pear very beautiful.

*Monday, 19, Baltimore*. Mr. Marburg gave a dinner in my honour. I had him on one side of me and the head of a large women's college here, Groucher, on the other. It is a thousand strong. They are particularly interested in British labour problems.

I only got to bed at 1 and the following morning was called for at 9.30 a.m. and taken off to Groucher College, as the President of the institution had asked me to talk to them. After a hymn had been sung in the college hall where they were all gathered, just about a thousand, I spoke for nearly half-an-hour. I managed to make one or two jokes at the start and got on friendly terms with the audience.

Then the rest of the day was spent going round to see E.-S.U. members and I was taken off to the golf links and played nine holes. I really was too tired to enjoy it and it was frightfully hot. On the links I picked a wild flower called bloodroot, when you pick it it stains your hands. I forgot to say that before going to the golf links I asked particularly to see Cardinal Gibbons. The Cardinal is a charming old man of eighty-six with beautiful manners and a spiritual face and being with him was a real rest. His parents were Irish and he has an Irish accent and is most enlightened and is not anti-British. He recalled many pleasant days spent in

England. He insisted on coming to the door and opened the hall door himself when he said good-bye.

21 April, *New Willard Hotel, Washington*. After breakfast, which I always have in my bedroom, I found Admiral Niblack waiting for me and he escorted me to the Navy Department and I was at once taken into the room of Secretary Josephus Daniels. There were eight or ten Admirals and various high officials. I had my remarks written out so as to be sure and not say anything wrong and then handed over the cheque for £6,000.\* Daniels replied. We were photographed by about a dozen photographers and then taken by a cinema man.

At 11.30 I went round to see the Secretary for War, Mr. Newton D. Baker, then a motor-car was placed at my disposal and accompanied by a young officer I was taken round to see the chief public buildings. It is a very beautiful town and the public squares were lovely with pink and white magnolia, Judas trees and fruit trees and others which I don't know. The "Speedway" along the banks of the Potomac, planted with cherry trees sent by the Emperor of Japan to Mr. Taft when he was President, is an absolute vision of loveliness just now. I lunched with Major Putnam's brother, Mr. Herbert Putnam, who is the Librarian of Congress. There were twenty-five and I was guest of honour and sat next Senator Medill McCormick.

At tea I was told the romance of Dr. Wilfrid Grenfell of Labrador, a man I admire very much who has worked all his life among the people of the Labrador Coast. He was forty and had never thought of marrying. He was crossing the Atlantic and looked round him and beside him lying on a deck chair was the most beautiful woman he had ever seen and he talked to her for one-and-a-half hours on end. By then she was getting a little bit nervous and said, "I have never had anyone to talk to me like that before. I do not even know your name and you don't know mine," to which he replied, "No, but I know what it is going to be." They have been married six years and it has been a great success!

22 April, *Washington*. Eighty-one in the shade to-day. Went to the Shoreham Hotel and was entertained by Richard Oulahan and ten of the chief journalists here at a very pleasant and friendly lunch. I have made many good newspaper friends. I was very pleased with the account which appeared in the *New York Times*

\* One of the objects of my visit was to present a cheque for £6,000 to Mr. Daniels, as head of the American Navy, subscribed by private individuals in Great Britain for the erection of a monument in the United States as a lasting memorial "to the spirit of co-operation which had existed between the American and British Navies during the war."

yesterday about the function of my handing over the cheque in connection with the Dover Patrol. It was on their main news page. Very good for E.-S.U. cause.

A large Government car was sent to take me out to Mount Vernon, Washington's home, 14 miles away. It was such a marvellous afternoon with a slight breeze and the country a dream of loveliness. The house where Washington lived is a wonderful and dignified old English country place, looking down on the Potomac, the flowing lawns and out-houses of an English country estate just as it was. He is buried in the grounds. The lilac, mauve and white, was out, and the ground all around the tree stems was covered with periwinkle. It is a marvellous place for a national valhalla. If ever there was a bit of England, in which a great Englishman lived, it is Mount Vernon.

I have met most of the celebrities here: "Uncle Joe Cannon" who is eighty-four, Mr. Lansing, Governor Lowden and all sorts of other big-wigs. I spent the evening at the Washington Press Club.

24 April, *William Penn Hotel, Pittsburgh*. I like staying at an hotel called William Penn. This is a big industrial town rather like Manchester. I arrived on Sunday morning. I had a good night as I was extravagant and took the drawing-room car compartment of the Pullman, which means you have a sleeping compartment to yourself and take two tickets, but it makes all the difference to your comfort. I have been feeling rather lonely here and realizing the uphill nature of the job.

*Later*. Our E.-S.U. man, Mr. Wilmott, has just come to see me; he is Secretary of the Carnegie Hero Fund. I was introduced to quite a lot of people at lunch. Then I was taken a three hours' trip all round the town and shown the chief sights including Mellon's home and we ended up at the most sumptuous club I have ever seen, with a swimming bath on the third floor!

*Monday, 24 April, Statler Hotel, Cleveland*. Arrived here at 8.30 p.m. and there were no porters or taxis. Late in the evening before I left, a party of newspaper men came to interview me. One of them almost before I had opened my mouth launched forth on a tirade about "England's 800 years' oppression in Ireland." I soon realised that he too had been born in Ireland and we parted the best of friends!

At Cleveland when I came down after breakfast I also felt rather dispirited as there were no messages from the University or my other friends. I spent over an hour on the telephone trying to get in touch with our Corresponding Secretary. I was just going

to give it up as a bad job when Dr. Thwing, President of the University, came in to see me and was so nice and took me off to lunch with several of the other professors.

We discussed E.-S.U. matters and I felt it was well worth having come here, such a friendly atmosphere, I felt quite at home, though arriving at these strange towns is rather a horrible business and I sometimes feel very depressed and almost wonder why I have started another society. I ought really to have an advance agent to pave the way. All the rush and scramble for the dollar does nauseate me. . . .

27 April, *Blackstone Hotel, Chicago*. Very comfortable hotel, my room costs £2 a night. Had to cable for another £50 as travelling is more expensive than I expected. Went to lunch with friends at a club, they were all very friendly but not really interested in the E.-S.U. All the afternoon I went round calling to try and find the right kind of E.-S.U. people, without any luck. Got back here just before dinner, it is cold and raw, like London in the winter—trying after the lovely weather in Washington—felt rather depressed as the anti-British feeling is very strong.

Lunched at the Atlantic Club with my friend James Keeley. He had twenty of the chief people to meet me, including Samuel Insull, an old friend, Mr. Cyrus McCormick, Mr. Victor Lawson of the *Chicago Daily News*, McCutcheon the cartoonist and several of the leading packers. The lunch went off very well and after my talk there was general conversation. I felt at last that I was getting in touch with just the right people, and began to feel more encouraged as far as Chicago is concerned.

At five I was taken off in a motor to see the South Chicago parks and dined with a group of editors. One man attacked me on the Sinn Fein subject and I felt rather forlorn. He really was a very nice fellow and the others told me I kept my end up and I really quite enjoyed the evening. . . .

There is just the same feeling of rush here that I found eleven years ago. The town is reclaiming large plots of land from Lake Michigan to extend the space for parks and public buildings. Everybody on my way here told me that I should find a lot of anti-British feeling and one man in Philadelphia said, "To admit ever having drunk a cup of afternoon tea was considered treason to the American Constitution!"

29 April. At 10.30 a.m. I am to be taken to the stockyards again. I did not at all want to go but at the luncheon yesterday Edward Morris, the President of one of the big-five Packing Companies, invited me and as I wanted to get him interested in

the E.-S.U. I did not see how I could refuse ! Mr. Morris sent me his own car. I shuddered inwardly as I was taken to the cattle-killing beds.

I was escorted by a young man who had been an officer in the American Army in France and we were given long white butchers' coats to keep us clean. I had very vivid recollections of my previous visit fourteen years before. I could not bear seeing the poor animals waiting. By saying I had not much time I managed to see the minimum of horrors. I do think all this slaughter business is awful. I am sure we shall evolve out of meat eating one day !

I think it was worth my going because I met one very nice man keen on the E.-S.U. I then went back and lunched with Colonel Robert McCormick, the chief proprietor of the *Chicago Tribune*, which frequently adopts rather an anti-British point of view. I had a very strenuous one-and-a-half hours arguing with various members of the editorial staff and most of the rest of the afternoon was taken up with Press interviews. The Middle West understands very little about the British Commonwealth and what it stands for in the world. Irish propaganda has done its work.

I have made a good number of E.-S.U. friends here who have promised real help, but it has all been a great rush and I ought to have had more time.

1 *May, Chicago.* I have got several really good people interested in the E.-S.U. and I think our prospects look better. I was taken by a man called Prosser to meet a group of his friends so that I could get them interested. They all promised help. They wanted me to address an audience of a thousand of the leading businessmen in Chicago at lunch next Wednesday. I would like to have done so but I can't fit it in.

Before I started breakfast this morning two men called in to see me. It is rather awful the way they invade you at all hours. You literally have no moments to yourself. Even going in to have a bath is quite difficult as when you are in the bath you are almost sure to be rung up on the long-distance telephone. For people who are doing public work I think there will have to be telephoneless bedrooms in the future. I have had to do a great deal of spade work in Chicago but I think I have left things on a very different basis.

2 *May, Minneapolis.* Mr. Herschel V. Jones, the proprietor of the *Minneapolis Journal*, called for me. He took me for a spin round Minneapolis and its twin city St. Paul. He is a charming old man and has a wonderful collection of rare books. He came over last

year (1918) with one of the parties of editors, and I looked after him at the Ministry of Information. I lunched at his house and met his wife, altogether a very friendly atmosphere.

Then I dined with Mr. W. C. Edgar of *The Bellman*, who has enrolled fifty members as a start. I was much encouraged.

I forget if I told you that I have had a friendly postcard from the Chief. The last words are "am fat and red." He thoroughly sympathises with my English-speaking friendship work.

3 *May, Minneapolis.* My E.-S.U. meeting was a great success, it was held on the second floor of the Minneapolis Club. I talked for fifty minutes and then answered questions and I think from the E.-S.U. standpoint it was a great success. The leading big-wigs were there I was told: among them the head of the great Washburn-Crosby milling firm. There was such a friendly atmosphere. This is the greatest milling centre in the world. During the dinner a wire was read from our Honorary Corresponding Secretary at Winnipeg, C. W. Rowley:

"Much regret inability to accept Mr. Jones' and your hospitality in honour of Major Wrench. Fully agree with your cartoon 'one tongue, one destiny' of the English-speaking people for the benefit of the world. Humanity to-day looks to the English-speaking people for leadership and a better life. Don't let us disappoint them. See Isaiah, chapter forty-one, verse six: 'They helped everyone his neighbour; and everyone said to his brother, be of good courage.'"

Wasn't it nice of him? There was tremendous applause after it was read.

5 *May, Back in Chicago on way to Boston.* We arrived back at Chicago at nine. I particularly wanted to see Dr. Judson, head of the University, who had resigned from the E.-S.U. on account of the quarrel on the New York Committee. I was determined to try and get him back, so I took a taxi out to the University, about seven miles. The University is a marvellous place and is only thirty years old and has an endowment of £10,000,000! I do admire the way the rich men in America give these huge sums of money with no hope of reward. Thank heavens they have no title-business here.

Judson was very nice, I got him to withdraw his resignation and I settled everything up all right and I told him I was going entirely to reorganise things when I got back to New York. He said he was very glad I had been out to see him. I felt well satisfied with my visit.



6 May, 70, *Beacon Street, Boston*. I travelled here by the Twentieth Century Limited and realised afresh how dangerous these level crossing are. Wasn't it awful—the first section of our train, travelling at sixty miles an hour dashed into a Ford car somewhere near Toledo, Ohio, and killed the four people in it. I saw a white collar lying by the track.

I was met at the station by Mr. Allan Forbes, such a nice man with a charming wife. I felt at home with them straight away. There was such a home-like atmosphere in their house, old furniture, an open fireplace with crackling logs and a Scottish nurse for the children.

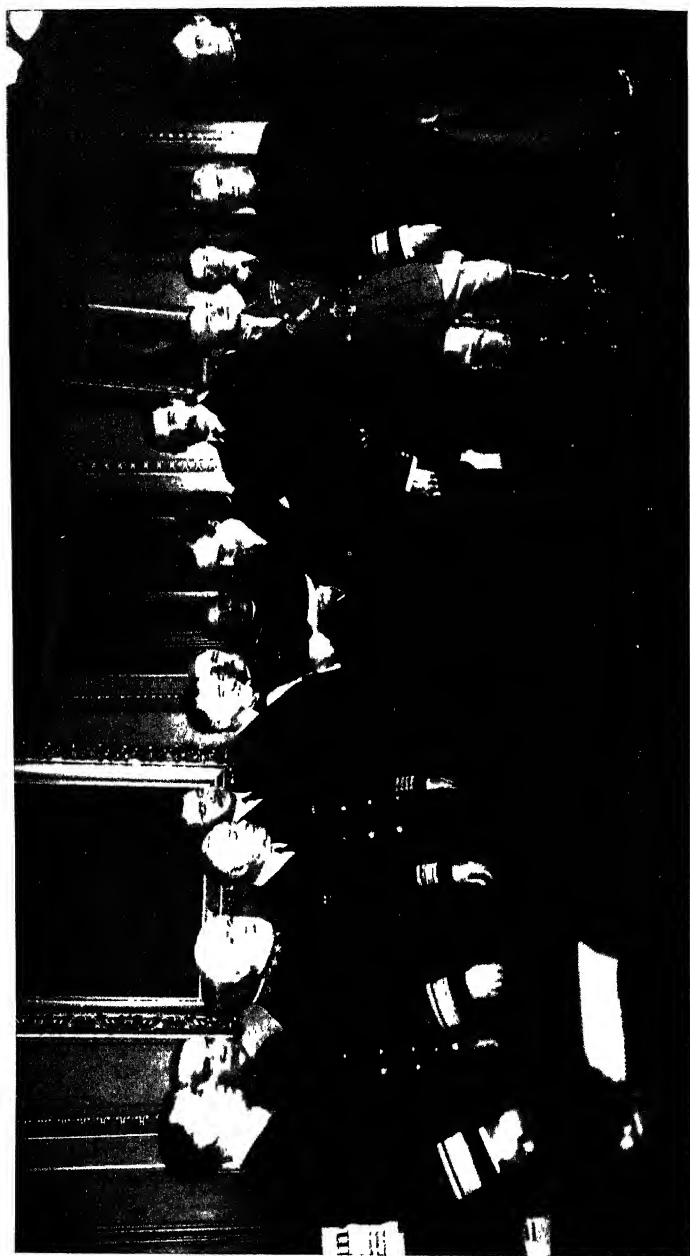
7 May, *Boston*. Just got back from a meeting of E.-S.U. members at Architectural Club, a Mr. W. P. Thayer in chair. It all went off very well.

8 May, 70, *Beacon Street, Boston*. I love Harvard and its old-world setting. I like to think it has existed an equal number of years under the British and American flags. I dined at the Harvard Club last night, all very friendly. On getting back sat up having a talk with my host and hostess. We discussed the problem of re-marriage. She said of course people ought to re-marry.

8 May, *In train from Boston—New Haven*. Caught the 8.30 train for my four-hour journey to Newhaven as I want to see Mr. Taft, this is my only chance. I am so anxious to try and persuade him to withdraw his resignation from the American E.-S.U. He resigned in connection with the controversy between the two men on the New York Committee I told you about. I am told he is a very difficult man to persuade to alter his decision when once he has taken up a certain point of view, so I am by no means sanguine.

8 May, *In the train on way back to Boston*. It has been pouring all day and I set off in a taxi to see ex-President Taft with feelings of trepidation. I need not have been so fearful as to the result of my visit. Mr. Taft was spending a few days at New Haven in between two lecture tours. He had just got back from the Southern States and leaves to-morrow for the Pacific Coast. I wonder how our public men would enjoy round trips of 7,000 miles as a matter of routine! Mr. Taft was most friendly. When he laughs he has a peculiar kind of chuckle, which is I believe quite famous. I saw him in his office and I had no difficulties at all, and he consented straight away to remain President of the English-Speaking Union in the United States. He also gave me a message to our members for printing in *The Landmark*. I explained





*Photo by Harris & Ewing, Washington.*

To commemorate British-American naval co-operation. The author handing a cheque for £6,000 to Mr. Joseph Daniels at the Navy Department, Washington, D.C. April, 1920.

to him exactly what I had done and that the whole Committee was going to be reorganised as soon as I got back to New York. All this is very satisfactory and I feel I have now practically straightened the situation out. It all depends if I can fix up with the group I want to in New York. If I can I think I shall really put the whole E.-S.U. in the U.S.A. on a proper footing.

I do like this absence of formality in the U.S.A. Here is the only living ex-President of the United States and he treats me just like an equal and expects to be treated in the same way. I am very pleased about Taft, especially so as my host in Boston, Allan Forbes, said he did not think I would succeed.

9 May. *Back in New York. Commodore Hotel.* The Overseas League meeting in Boston last night was a great success and I am not sure that it was not one of the most enthusiastic Overseas meetings I have ever had. Was interviewed by the *Christian Science Monitor* before leaving.

I am staying at the Commodore Hotel, my room is on the eighteenth floor with a wonderful view. I found a huge batch of letters waiting for me from all over the United States. How I wish I was able to afford to have a secretary with me. I am dining with the publishers of the Trade papers in America to-night as their guest of honour.

My friends the Trade journalists came at 6 o'clock and took me off to dinner. There were 150 Trade journalists present and it was a very good audience. I talked rather more on business lines than purely on the ideal side. The audience was very cordial. I spoke for just three-quarters of an hour. My friend Mr. H. M. Swetland spoke after me.

He was one of the Trade journalists who came over to England in 1918 and whom I looked after at the Ministry of Information, and he it was to whom I had to hand the cable about the death of his son in France when he was there in 1918. He has just come back from Germany and made an excellent speech entirely on my lines as regards treating Germany as an equal in Europe and said till the economic life of Germany and Austria was re-established all civilisation would suffer. I was surprised that he dared to speak so openly. He prefaced his remarks by saying that perhaps the war had come home to him on account of his son's death as much as anyone in that room.

11 May. After lunch I had to make rather a difficult call and I felt rather oppressed by all the difficult problems in connection with getting the E.-S.U.

12 May. To-day is the most important day of the trip as far as

I am concerned. I am dining this evening with the group in whose hands I want to leave the E.-S.U. cause over here. Had a very busy day, telephone calls began at eight and people were waiting downstairs to catch me on the way out, then I had to make a succession of calls up till lunch, then I had a lunch at the Yale Club with Dr. Frederick Lynch connected with a Carnegie Church Foundation. He had asked thirty of the leading bishops and clergy to meet me. Coming back in the subway really is a nightmare, it is a mad struggle, fifty times worse than our Underground, and the people are so rude and I felt very depressed about humanity *en masse*.

*Later.* I am just back from my meeting. It was a great success and I have got a really strong committee. The whole thing has been a much greater success than I expected. The dinner was given me by Mr. Paul D. Cravath at the University Club and it was a kind of E.-S.U. Convention with our branches at New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Baltimore and Pittsburgh represented, while I was empowered to represent Chicago, Minneapolis and Cleveland. It was a very influential gathering. It was decided to make an entirely new start and we constituted the English-Speaking Union of the United States, to be incorporated in America and to be an independent but sister society of the E.-S.U. of the British Empire.\*

13 May. Spent a lot of time with my friends Mr. Paul Cravath and Wells, two of the chief people in the new E.-S.U. group here. Such a load has been lifted off my mind about the E.-S.U. I hope this time I shall not be disappointed.

15 May. Yesterday really was a nightmare of a day, I have been rushed off my feet all these last two or three days but I shall be able to rest on board. It has been a case of perpetual telephone calls from 8.30 onwards. I lunched with Wells at the Harvard Club and he had fourteen to meet me—among others Theodore Roosevelt's son. During the afternoon I called on various people and had an interesting talk with Colonel House who was President Wilson's adviser at the Peace Conference, a man with a very sane outlook and a great friend of Wiseman's.

Then I had to dress in rather a hurry as people were waiting and Alexander Smith Cochran called for me and came with me to the dinner which was given me by the Foreign Press Correspondents in New York. It was the first time I had seen Cochran since he had sent me that £1,100 for the E.-S.U., but he would not let himself be thanked. He is a curious disgruntled person but has a very kind heart.

\* For list of those present at this dinner see Appendix, page 494.

16 May, *On the Carmania*. Such a lovely evening with crimson sunset and watching all the steamers glide out of New York Harbour was a sight I shall never forget. The boat is absolutely packed, my cabin mates are, a Dane engaged in the butter business, and the other a young American going to India for a year in the Jute business.

17 May. *Carmania*. I saw a huge rat in the lavatory just opposite my cabin yesterday and did not relish the thought that it would only have to run across the passage to come into our cabin. I want on the voyage to finish all the accounts of my American trip and also to write one or two articles for the press. I am playing quite a lot of shuffle board.

19 May. I am chiefly playing shuffle board with Clive Davies and an American called Maynard Williams who is connected with the *National Geographic Magazine*. We talk much about our mutual friend Lawrence of Arabia.

*Saturday, 22 May*. I am going to have an E.-S.U. meeting on board this evening. I am feeling rather nervous about it.

23 May. The E.-S.U. meeting on board last night was a great success and I had one of the most enthusiastic meetings of all my tour and I felt that I did justice to the cause. I so much enjoy the thought that I never know how many Americans and how many British are in my audiences. Forty people signed on as members straight away.

*The following day*. A lovely day and the sea so wonderful and the gulls circling round. We have just left Queenstown. I roped in another twenty E.-S.U. members to-day making my bag sixty on the return journey. (*Letters.*)

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# The Last Chapter

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## The Last Chapter

I RETURNED from New York with a two-fold conviction. The conviction that upon cordial and close English-speaking co-operation rested the hope of mankind and the conviction that the task of steering the English-Speaking Union to success would not be easy.

On getting back to London, ready to throw myself with renewed determination into my work, I went through the inevitable period of depression and reaction. For a time at least my mind dwelt on the difficulties. I knew how strong were the forces in America trying to fan the embers of discord between our two peoples. I was well acquainted with anti-Americanism in Great Britain—much in evidence now that the days of war co-operation were receding and that the United States seemed more than ever determined to embark on a policy of splendid isolation. The unsettled Irish question was a boulder across the path and till it was out of the way frank British-American friendship would be difficult.

I was ten years older than when I started the Overseas League. I had lost some of my confidence in myself. The war and the immediate post-war period had shattered many hopes. I no longer felt so confident in a kindly fate—or perhaps it would be more correct to say that periods of doubt as to the ability of individuals to alter the destiny of nations became more frequent. The two great causes that I cared for, Empire Unity and British-American friendship, were passing through troublous times. In Ireland, South Africa and India there were strong forces opposed to closer co-operation. In both Great Britain and in the United States the fomentors of trouble were meeting with temporary success.

I was acutely conscious of the indifference of the majority to the cause I had at heart. War-time enthusiasts now became self-absorbed. I sometimes thought regretfully of my position at the Ministry of Information two



years earlier. When in a government department it is comparatively easy to pull strings. I envied American friends who were working for great causes with the backing of the Carnegie and Rockefeller foundations.

There was a steadily growing number of adherents to both my causes and I had loyal colleagues, but nevertheless the mass of humanity was indifferent. Committee meetings were no longer as thrilling as immediately after the war, when visions of reconstruction were in the air and almost any object seemed attainable. I learnt afresh how different is the realisation of a scheme from the vision. Committee meetings were often disillusioning. "The letter killeth."

When I started the English-Speaking Union I vowed I would never enforce my views in face of opposition. I tried to keep in the background. I recalled glaring examples of self-advertisers. In 1920 the world had not become familiar with dictators, in whom self-adulation is regarded as a virtue! I pondered on the difficulty of keeping early enthusiasm red-hot. Once ideals assume concrete form the life-spirit evaporates. I envied authors and artists. They are judged by visible works. Founders of schemes are not so fortunate. The reality is a travesty of the ideal, embarked upon in a moment of insight. The popular preacher or lecturer has great moments of elation when he sways his audience. Crusades are comparatively easy: the speaker is carried along by his enthusiasm and the enthusiasm of his supporters. But translating the views expounded on the platform into reality during ordinary humdrum life round the committee table requires staying power. Only those with stout hearts and reserves of inspiration should start movements! The practical idealist lives in two worlds—the world of the spirit and the world of hard fact. In the latter he is aiming at showing results. It is not enough to play upon the emotions. Enthusiasm is evanescent. The paucity of result compared with his dream is baffling. The joy of service must be sufficient reward. He must not for ever be measuring up life's journey with a tape

measure. He must get a true sense of values by withdrawing from the practical world to the realm of spirit.

“The hope of the City of God at the other  
end of the road.”

(JOHN MASEFIELD)

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# WARTIME ACTIVITIES OF THE OVERSEAS LEAGUE

(PATRON—H. M. THE KING)

Founded 1910

Incorporated by Royal Charter 1923.



## PATRIOTIC LEAGUE OF BRITONS OVERSEAS

Founded 1914.

(Amalgamated with the Overseas Club, 1918.)



## THE BABIES OF THE EMPIRE

“A crusade for the health of women and children for the honour of the Empire, under the auspices of the Overseas Club.”

Founded 1917.

FOUNDER: SIR FREDERICK TRUBY KING.

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## APPENDIX A

### WARTIME MESSAGES SENT TO THE OVERSEAS LEAGUE

H.M. THE KING.

19 May, 1915.

Dear Sir,

The King is interested to hear of the generous action of the members of the Overseas Club in presenting to the Royal Flying Corps an aeroplane, and of their intention to make similar contributions.

Yours very faithfully,  
STAMFORDHAM.

Buckingham Palace,  
2 November, 1916.

Dear Sir,

The information contained in your letter of yesterday has been communicated to the King, the Patron of the Overseas Club, and His Majesty congratulates the members upon their generous gift of eighty-five aeroplanes to the Imperial Aircraft Flotilla formed by the Society.

Yours very truly,  
STAMFORDHAM.

The Overseas Club opened its fifth War Fund in 1916 with the title "They've remembered us" to provide comforts for the men at the Front and prisoners of war. The King graciously started the Fund with a cheque for £25, which paid for 100 Gift boxes:—

Dear Sir,

In reply to your letter of the 5th instant, addressed to Lord Stamfordham, I am commanded by the King to send you the enclosed cheque for £25, as a donation from His Majesty to the Special Gifts Scheme inaugurated by the Overseas Club.

Yours faithfully,  
F. PONSONBY,  
Keeper of the Privy Purse.

Buckingham Palace,  
31 March, 1916.

Dear Sir,

I have received and laid before the King, the Patron of the

Overseas Club, a copy of their official Monthly Journal, which you have been good enough to send for His Majesty's acceptance.

The King congratulates the management of the Club upon the very successful work which has been achieved during the past eighteen months.

Yours very faithfully,

STAMFORDHAM.

H.M. QUEEN ALEXANDRA.

Buckingham Palace,

30 December, 1915.

I thank the members of the Overseas Club most sincerely for the wonderful generosity they have shown in contributing to my Field Force Fund and to everything that is needed by our troops at the Front. It is impossible to value their patriotism too highly, and it is made all the more noticeable, as the members who have contributed to these gifts are scattered all over the world."

ALEXANDRA.

# FROM THE QUEEN OF THE BELGIANS.

Her Majesty the Queen of the Belgians sent the following gracious message of thanks for the tobacco and cigarettes forwarded to the Belgian trenches through the Overseas Club's Tobacco Fund.

Maison Militaire du Roi,

La Panné, le 12 Mai, 1916.

Monsieur le Secrétaire,

La Reine a reçu les caisses de cigarettes que vous lui avez fait parvenir pour nos soldats.

Sa Majesté s'est montrée très sensible à la prévenante sollicitude que votre Comité ne cesse de témoigner à notre armée, et Elle m'a chargé de transmettre à tous les membres de votre Club l'expression de Sa vive gratitude.

Conformément avec instructions de notre Souveraine, la distribution de votre généreux don sera fait selon le désir que vous avez exprimé.

Veuillez agréer, Monsieur le Secrétaire, l'assurance de ma considération la plus distinguée.

L'Officier d'Ordonnance du Roi

PREUDHOMME.

## NEW YEAR MESSAGES, JANUARY, 1917.

MR. DAVID LLOYD GEORGE,  
Prime Minister.

I should like to take this opportunity of congratulating the Overseas Club on the formation of the Imperial Aircraft Flotilla. I understand that to date—thanks to the splendid generosity of the subscribers overseas—you have been able to present to the Royal Flying Corps over eighty aeroplanes, with promises of a number more.

I hope that your ambition of an Imperial Air Fleet of 100 units will be realised.

It is very gratifying to note that our kinsmen overseas are taking such a deep interest in our Air Service.

Yours very truly,  
D. LLOYD GEORGE.

MR. H. H. ASQUITH,  
Ex-Premier.

The Imperial patriotism of our fellow-subjects beyond the seas, unfalteringly sustained through all vicissitudes since its first impressive manifestation at the outbreak of war, has been a surprise to the enemy, but not to the Mother Country. We stand together before the world in the knowledge that our cause is just, and together we shall prevail.

All our thanks are due to the Overseas Club and to the Patriotic League of Britons Overseas for their noble contribution to our military resources; and I am confident that they will not relax their efforts till victory is won.

H. H. ASQUITH.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR,  
Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

The Overseas Club and the Patriotic League of Britons Overseas have shown a splendid generosity in their contributions to the fighting services of the Empire. It is a further proof—if further proof were needed—of the patriotic singleness of purpose which animates all British subjects, however distant be the part of the Empire in which they happen to live.

ARTHUR JAMES BALFOUR.



SIR EDWARD CARSON,  
First Lord of the Admiralty.

January, 1917.

By forming a link between citizens of the British Empire in every part of the world the Overseas Club is carrying out a noble task and has my best wishes for the success of its undertaking. Though seas may divide us, we never forget that we are one race animated by the same ideas of Liberty and Justice founded upon the humanity which springs from Christianity. The Old Country looks to the New to carry their standard wherever they go, and thus it is that at the trumpet sound for action our hearts throb together in the united action to beat back the tyrant aggressor.

EDWARD CARSON.

ADMIRAL SIR JOHN JELLICOE.

H.M.S. *Iron Duke*,

January, 1917.

Sincere congratulations on the immense success which has been achieved by the Overseas Club since its inception, and my hearty good wishes for the future.

ADMIRAL JELLICOE.

FIELD-MARSHAL SIR DOUGLAS HAIG.

General Headquarters,

British Armies in France.

Dear Lady des Voeux

I have to thank you very much for your letter telling me of the handsome donation of £1,300 made by your Shanghai Branch to your Soldiers' and Sailors' Fund.

In my own name, and in that of all ranks under my command, I beg to express sincere thanks to the members of the Shanghai Branch for their generosity. This practical demonstration that Britons overseas are prepared to undergo great sacrifices for the common cause is a very great encouragement to everyone now fighting in France.

Wishing you all the greatest good fortune in this New Year.

Believe me,

Yours very truly,

D. HAIG,

Field-Marshal.

FIELD-MARSHAL SIR DOUGLAS HAIG.

As the War draws to a close the Overseas Club and Patriotic League enters upon its stage of greatest usefulness. The bonds

which the War has knit between the different portions of the Empire must be kept strong. The Overseas Club has no small part to fulfil in this great task.

December, 1918.

VISCOUNT MILNER

Secretary of State for War.

I willingly respond to your request that I should send a message to the Members of the Overseas Club and Patriotic League on the occasion of the issue of the special Peace Number of *Overseas*.

The Overseas Club has rendered admirable service not only in quickening the sentiment of a common patriotism in every corner, however remote, of the Empire, but also more particularly in keeping alive the consciousness of partnership in the British Commonwealth among the British communities scattered throughout the world. No one has had better opportunities than myself for realising what that has meant in actual addition to our armed forces by all the volunteers who have flocked home from the uttermost ends of the earth to join the British Army, as well as in the contributions which have been so generously made to every patriotic purpose by the British communities in foreign countries.

All I can say to the Members of the Overseas Club and Patriotic League is to go on with their good work. The British Commonwealth of Free Nations—the only League of Nations actually in existence, and the most essential constituent of any League of Nations that may yet come into being as the outcome of the lessons of the War—needs preserving in peace as much as in war. Its continued existence will depend above all on mutual understanding and sympathy between its scattered parts, and on the growth of a common patriotism embracing without weakening, their various local and national patriotisms. Here is a splendid field for work, and I know that willing labourers will not be wanting.

December, 1918.

## SUMMARY OF THE WAR ACTIVITIES OF THE OVERSEAS CLUB AND PATRIOTIC LEAGUE.

### OVERSEAS TOBACCO FUND.

1914-1918. In September, 1914, the Overseas Club Tobacco Fund was established to provide tobacco for the troops of the British Empire on all Fronts. A sum of £368,203 was received from members of the Overseas League and their friends during the War.

## ANALYSIS OF SUBSCRIPTIONS TO THE OVERSEAS CLUB TOBACCO FUND.

	Amount Collected.
Canada . . . . .	£53,749
U.S.A. (for British troops) . . . . .	48,900
„ (for Belgian troops) . . . . .	52,283
Australia and New Zealand . . . . .	74,314
Britons in Europe . . . . .	8,752
Africa . . . . .	23,842
Asia . . . . .	28,252
S. America . . . . .	16,399
C. America . . . . .	4,108
	<hr/>
Collected in pennies from the children of the Empire . . . . .	310,599
	57,604
	<hr/>
	£368,203
	<hr/>

## APPROXIMATE QUANTITIES OF CIGARETTES AND TOBACCO DESPATCHED.

	Cigarettes.	Packets of Tobacco.
British Expeditionary Forces (including Prisoners of War) . . . . .	142,760,000	2,171,000
Anzac Army . . . . .	73,850,000	1,121,000
Canadian Expeditionary Forces . . . . .	59,500,000	1,026,000
Belgian Army . . . . .	39,500,000	308,000
S. African Contingent . . . . .	9,250,000	119,000
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	324,860,000	4,745,000
	<hr/>	<hr/>

By Christmas, 1915, the Fund was receiving over a thousand letters a day. The donors had the right to state to which front their gifts should be sent or whether to British, Canadian, Australian, New Zealand, South African, Newfoundland, Indian, French or Belgian troops.

## THE OVERSEAS AIRCRAFT FLOTILLA

At the end of 1914 it was decided to organize an "Overseas Aircraft Flotilla." Mr. Wrench's idea was to ask each section of the Empire to present an aeroplane to the Royal Flying Corps, to be *named* after the district which provided it. 172 aeroplanes and

seaplanes costing £278,630 were presented by the Overseas Club and Patriotic League to the British Government. In addition a large number of machines were presented direct to the authorities, as a result of the League's propaganda.

The following letter of approval was received from the Army Council :—

War Office, London, S.W.,  
18 January, 1915.

Sir,

With reference to your letter of the 5th January 1915, I am commanded by the Army Council to inform you that if any branches and members of the Overseas Club desire to present aeroplanes to the British Government for the use of the Royal Flying Corps, the offer will be gladly accepted.

I am to enclose the photographs of two of the types of aeroplanes in use at the present time and to state the cost of the 100 h.p. Gnome, Vickers' Gun Bi-plane, complete with gun is about £2,250; and that of the 70 h.p. Renault B.E., 2 c., £1,500.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient Servant,  
B. B. CUBITT.

Evelyn Wrench, Esq.,  
Hon. Organizer,  
Overseas Club.

Mr. A. Bonar Law, Secretary of State for the Colonies, wrote on 16th October, 1915 :—

I sincerely hope the Flotilla will eventually number the hundred units which you are attempting to provide—a very striking tribute to the patriotism and generosity of British subjects over seas.

Among the other sums collected by the Headquarters of the Overseas Club and Patriotic League, during the War were :—

Overseas League Red Cross Fund . . . .	£123,292
Overseas League's Soldiers & Sailors Fund . . . .	£75,578
Overseas League's R.A.F. Hospital Fund . . . .	£29,360
Overseas League's Hamper Fund . . . .	£26,849
Collected for Overseas League War Memorial (up to December 31, 1918) . . . .	£20,070
Collected for Babies of the Empire in 1918 and 1919 . . . .	£2,416
Donations to other War Funds . . . .	£9,263

In addition large sums were sent *direct* from branches and members of the Society to every authorized War Fund.

## THE PATRIOTIC LEAGUE OF BRITONS OVERSEAS

(Was amalgamated with the Overseas Club in 1918, when the title of the joint society became the Overseas Club and Patriotic League which it retained until the granting of a Royal Charter in 1923. Henceforward the Society became the Overseas League.)

In August, 1914, Mr. F. W. Hayne, O.B.E., an Englishman who had spent much of his life in Chile, conceived the idea of forming a league to unite British subjects *living in foreign lands* and to enable them to bear a share in contributing to the "burden of Empire."

To help him in the task of putting his idea into practice he called upon the services of his friend Mr. W. Maxwell-Lyte.

The help of the Foreign Office was enlisted, a powerful committee under the Chairmanship of Lord Selborne was formed and the King consented to become patron of the society. The original aim of the organisation was to collect sufficient money to present a warship to the British Navy.

A letter signed by Sir Edward Grey was sent to all British Missions abroad and the full force of the Consular Service was enlisted in support of the appeal. Within the first seventeen months of the League's existence a sum of £50,000 was collected and 150 branches formed among the British Communities in foreign lands—although the hope of collecting sufficient funds to present a light cruiser (costing £300,000) or a destroyer (£150,000) had to be abandoned. The League presented some 50 seaplanes and aeroplanes to His Majesty's Government during its separate existence prior to its amalgamation with the Overseas Club on March 31st, 1918.

In May, 1915, the Joint Honorary Secretaries, Mr. F. W. Hayne and Mr. W. Maxwell-Lyte, found that they were unable to devote sufficient time to the interests of the League. Early in June, 1915, Lord Selborne, the Chairman, invited Mr. Wrench to become Honorary Secretary, a position which he filled until he obtained a position in the Royal Air Force in March, 1917.

On the occasion of the amalgamation of the two bodies the following messages were received :—

H.M. THE KING.

I am commanded to inform you that the King approves of the amalgamation of these two bodies and has graciously consented to continue to grant his patronage to the new society to be called The Overseas Club and Patriotic League of Britons Overseas.

RT. HON. A. J. BALFOUR,  
Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

I am much interested to know that the Overseas Club and Patriotic League of Britons Overseas have decided to establish themselves as one great organisation and I am persuaded that this decision is a wise one.

EARL OF SELBORNE, K.G.,  
Chairman, P.L.B.O.

At a moment like the present I feel that only good can result from the union of two societies whose aims are so similar. As one great Imperial society, without any tie of Party Politics, you may have a real opportunity of useful influence in the period of Reconstruction after the War. If our race wishes to play its part in saving mankind from a repetition of the crime and horror of the present War it must be united in its ideals, in its power of sacrifice, and in its renunciation of selfishness.

SELBORNE.

## THE BABIES OF THE EMPIRE

“A crusade for the health of women and children for the honour of the Empire, under the auspices of the Overseas Club.”

(Founder—SIR FREDERICK TRUBY KING.)

The aims of the Babies of the Empire which took over the Marlborough School of Mothercraft, subsequently the Mothercraft Training Centre, established by Lady Plunket (now Lady Victoria Braithwaite) and Miss Winifride Wrench under the auspices of the Overseas League in 1917 and with the assistance of Sir Bertrand (now Lord) and Lady Dawson, Mr. Peacock (now Sir E. R.) and Sir Alexander Roger, were :—

1. To uphold the Sacredness of the Body and the Duty of Health ; to inculcate a lofty view of the responsibilities of maternity and the duty of every mother to fit herself for the perfect fulfilment of the natural calls of motherhood, both before and after child-birth, and especially to advocate and promote the Breast-feeding of infants.

2. To acquire accurate information and knowledge on matters affecting the Health of Women and Children, and to disseminate such knowledge through the agency of its members, nurses, and others, by means of the natural handing on from one recipient or beneficiary to another, and the use of such agencies as periodical meetings at members' houses or elsewhere, demonstrations, lectures, correspondence, newspaper articles, pamphlets, books, etc.

3. To train especially, and to employ qualified Nurses, whose duty it will be to give sound, reliable instruction, advice, and assistance, on matters affecting the health and well-being of women, especially during pregnancy and while nursing infants, and on matters affecting the health and well-being of their children ; to train probationers and students in infant care and mothercraft ; and to educate and help parents and others in a practical way to domestic hygiene in general—all these things being done with a view to conserving the health and strength of the rising generation, and rendering both mother and offspring hardy, healthy, and resistive to disease.

4. To co-operative with any present or future organizations working for any of the foregoing or cognate objects.

# THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING UNION

Established June 28, 1918.

## THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING UNION OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE.

President : H.R.H. The Prince of Wales.

First President : Rt. Hon. Earl of Balfour.

Chairman : The Marquess of Reading.

## THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING UNION OF THE UNITED STATES.

President : Hon. John W. Davis.

First President : Hon. William H. Taft.

Chairman : Hon. George W. Wickersham.





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## CHIEF EVENTS IN THE HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING UNION

Founded June 28, 1918.

Mr. Wrench told Dr. Walter Hines Page of his scheme in February, 1915 and received the promise of his support after the War.

Mr. Wrench invited fifteen friends to dine with him at the Marlborough Club on June 28th, 1918, when he placed before them his idea of starting the English-Speaking Union. Those present were :—

Sir Algernon Aspinall.  
Mr. Boylston Beal (U.S.A.)  
Major Ian Hay Beith.  
Mr. John Buchan.  
Professor McNeil Dixon.  
The Rev. W. F. Geikie-Cobb.  
Sir Arthur Herbert.  
Mr. Francis Jones.  
Mr. James Keeley (U.S.A.).  
Sir George Mills McKay.  
Mr. Henry Noyes (Australia).  
Mr. Francis E. Powell (U.S.A.).  
Mr. A. Lyle Samuel.  
Sir George Sutton.  
Mr. Fullerton Waldo (U.S.A.).

The first meeting of the British Committee was held on July 5th, 1918. Lord Balfour was the first President of the English-Speaking Union of the British Empire. Mr. Wrench was the first Chairman.

The first office of the E.-S.U. was opened in July, 1918, at Lennox House, Howard Street, Strand, London, W.C.2.

*The Landmark*, the monthly magazine of the English-Speaking Union, was first published in January, 1919.

The absorption of the Atlantic Union, founded by Sir Walter Besant in 1897, took place in February, 1919.

The English-Speaking Union organized, by permission of the Dean and Chapter, a Memorial Service at Westminster Abbey on April 4th, 1919, to officers and men of the United States Army and Navy who fell in the War.

Club rooms were opened in Grand Hotel Buildings overlooking Trafalgar Square, April, 1920.

Mr. Wrench visited the United States in the spring of 1920 to advise on the reorganisation of the American section. He advocated the establishment of an independent Sister Society, incorporated under the laws of New York State.

Mr. William H. Taft saw Mr. Wrench at his request and agreed to withdraw his resignation as President of the American Society.

The Common Interests Committee of the English-Speaking Union was established in 1920 under the presidency of Lady Bryce and the Chairmanship of Mrs. Alfred Lyttelton, G.B.E.

In June, 1920, Lord Rothermere gave £20,000 through the English-Speaking Union for the endowment of a chair of American History at Oxford University.

The English-Speaking Union, by permission of The Dean and Chapter erected a tablet to the memory of Walter Hines Page in the cloisters, Westminster Abbey, and held a service to his memory, July 3, 1923.

The first Page Memorial Lecture was delivered by Sir Auckland Geddes in November, 1924. Lord Balfour presided.

The English-Speaking Union established a Journalistic Fellowship in the United States. Mr. J. A. Spender was the first Senior Fellow.

Permanent Headquarters and Club premises at Dartmouth House, 37, Charles Street, Berkeley Square, were acquired at a cost of £45,000 in 1926. The formal opening ceremony was performed by the Rt. Hon. Stanley Baldwin, M.P., Prime Minister.

Seventy travelling Fellowships for teachers have been given by the Page Memorial Fund and an extensive exchange of teachers carried out between Great Britain and the United States.

Lord Reading succeeded Mr. Winston Churchill as Chairman of English-Speaking Union of the British Empire, in 1920.

In 1930 Lord Grey of Fallodon succeeded Lord Balfour as President of the English-Speaking Union of the British Empire.

Her Majesty the Queen visited Dartmouth House in February, 1932.

In 1934 H.R.H. The Prince of Wales became the President of the English-Speaking Union of the British Empire.

#### OBJECTS OF THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING UNION AS SET FORTH IN THE ORIGINAL LEAFLET, PUBLISHED JULY, 1918.

The English-Speaking Union aims at increasing the knowledge of one another possessed by the English-speaking peoples. The English-Speaking Union aims at no formal alliances and it has nothing

to do with Governments, but is merely an attempt to promote good-fellowship among the English-Speaking democracies of the world.

In their common language, common sympathies, common traditions and common ideals, the English-Speaking peoples possess a great common heritage, which nothing can alter. The 3,000 miles of unarmed frontier existing between the United States and Canada is an outward symbol of the relationship between the two great sections of the English-Speaking peoples.

The sacred task to which we now set our hands is to perpetuate the existing sense of comradeship and brotherhood for all time.

The "Creed" of the English-Speaking Union is :—

Believing that the peace of the world and the progress of mankind can largely be helped by the unity of purpose of the English-Speaking democracies, we pledge ourselves to promote by every means in our power, a good understanding between the peoples of the United States of America and the British Commonwealth.

*Membership* :—Open to citizens of the United States of America and British subjects. The English-Speaking Union is non-party, non-sectarian and is open to men and women alike. It does not concern itself with the internal politics of the English-Speaking peoples, and membership does not in any way conflict with the duties of good citizenship. It is realised that each member's first duty is to the land of his birth or adoption.

*Practical Objects* :—To establish branches wherever the English language is spoken, with the view of promoting locally every movement which makes for the friendship of the English-Speaking peoples. To extend the hand of welcome in every country to English-Speaking visitors.

## BRANCHES OF THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING UNION OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE.

President : H.R.H. THE PRINCE OF WALES.

Chairman : Marquess of Reading.

Vice-Chairman : Sir Evelyn Wrench.

Hon. Secretary : Lieut.-Col. N. G. Thwaites,  
C.B.E., M.V.O., M.C.

General Secretary : Miss Helena Mills John, M.A.

Associate Secretary : R. S. P. Mackarness.

Headquarters :

Dartmouth House, 37, Charles Street, Berkeley Square, London, W.1.

## GREAT BRITAIN.

BATH : Hon. Secretary, Miss D. Hill, The Pump Room.

CAMBRIDGE : Secretary, Miss Christine H. Long, 7, Queen Anne Terrace.

CHESTER : Hon. Secretary, Mr. J. H. Dickson. Secretary, Miss M. A. Donne, c/o Messrs. Philipson & Golders Library, Eastgate Row.

DEVON : Secretary, Miss B. Sybil Bankart, 19, Southernhay West, Exeter.

EDINBURGH : Hon. Secretary, Mr. F. A. Hardy, 2, North Charlotte Street.

MANCHESTER : Hon. Secretary, Mr. E. Raymond Strcat, Chamber of Commerce.

NORWICH : Hon. Secretary, Mr. Frank Leney, The Strangers' Hall.

OXFORD : Secretary, Miss Fitzrandolph, 35, Davenant Road. (Visitors' rooms are open from July to September).

STRATFORD-ON-AVON : Secretary, Miss Gladys Mason, Shakespeare Memorial Lecture Room.

SUSSEX : Hon. Corresponding Secretary, Mrs. R. Shelley Bevington, Cobbler's Farm, Jarvis Brook, near Crowborough.

WINCHESTER : Hon. Secretary, Mrs. G. Crompton, Southgate Hotel.

YORKSHIRE : Hon. Secretary, Dr. Walter E. Collinge, F.S.A., Enquiry Office, 4, Lendal (opposite General Post Office), York.

## THE EMPIRE OVERSEAS.

## AUSTRALIA—

ADELAIDE (S. Australia) : Mrs. F. Magarey, Harvard Chambers, 198, North Terrace.

MELBOURNE (Victoria) : Miss Edith Noall, Elizabeth House, 340, Little Collins Street.

SYDNEY (N.S.W.) : Mrs. W. Wallace Turner, Messrs. Farmer & Co's Building, Pitt and Market Streets.

## NEW ZEALAND—

CHRISTCHURCH : Mr. C. E. Jones, 10, Snowdon Road, Fendalton.

WELLINGTON : Miss Marjorie Styles, Secretary, 2nd Floor, Dominion Farmers' Inst. Building.

## CANADA—

ONTARIO : Mr. G. W. Wildblood, The Royal York Hotel, Toronto.

BAHAMAS : Mrs. Mather Hare, Nassau.

BERMUDA : Mrs. F. Q. Champness, Chamber of Commerce Assembly Rooms, Hamilton.

MALTA : Capt. John V. C. Bonello, Osborne Hotel, Valetta.

# THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING UNION OF THE UNITED STATES.

President: HON. JOHN W. DAVIS.

National Secretary: Mr. Frank S. Coan.

## Headquarters:

19, West 44th Street, New York City, N.Y., U.S.A.

Telephone: Murray Hill 2-3641.

Telegrams: "Eneakon, New York."

- AUBURN-LEWISTON (Maine): Mr. W. R. Whitehorne, Lewiston.  
 BALTIMORE (Md.): Dr. Henry Barton Jacobs, 11, Mount Vernon Place.  
 BOSTON (Mass.): Mrs. Helen T. Cate, 33, Commonwealth Avenue.  
 BUFFALO (N.Y.): Dr. Augustus H. Shearer, Grosvenor Library.  
 CHAUTAUQUA (N.Y.): Miss Margaret B. Fraser, Chautauquia.  
 CHICAGO (Ill.): Miss Grace E. Telling, 360, North Michigan Avenue.  
 CINCINNATI (Ohio): Mr. L. W. Scott Alter, c/o American Tool Works, Pearl and Eggleston Avenues.  
 CLEVELAND (Ohio): Mr. Launcelot Packer, 1416, Midland Bldg., 101, Prospect Avenue, N.W.  
 COLUMBUS (Ohio): Mr. Gregg D. Wolfe, 650, East Rich Street.  
 DALLAS (Texas): Mr. C. J. Crampton, Chamber of Commerce.  
 DENVER (Colo.): Miss Helen V. Marshall, 860, Lafayette Street.  
 DES MOINES (Iowa): Miss Flora Dunlop, 405, 37th Street.  
 DETROIT (Mich.): Mrs. George Kamperman, 79, Longfellow Avenue.  
 GRINNEL (Iowa): Miss Grace Hunter, 1127, Park Street.  
 LAKE PLACID CLUB (N.Y.): Mr. H. W. Hicks.  
 LINCOLN (Neb.): Mr. W. O. Thomas, 1724, L. Street.  
 LOS ANGELES DISTRICT (Cal.): Mrs. Wilbur Bassett, 214, Loma Drive, Los Angeles.  
 LOUISVILLE (Ky.): Miss Helen Speed, Pendennis Club.  
 MILWAUKEE (Wis.): Rev. Holmes Whitmore, 1040, E. Knapp St.  
 MINNEAPOLIS (Minn.): Mr. C. P. Randall, 1260, Northwestern Bank Bldg.  
 NEW ORLEANS (La): Mr. K. B. Thompson, 403, Baronne Street.  
 PHILADELPHIA (Pa.): Dr. Ellis Paxson Oberholtzer, 506, Land Title Bldg., Broad and Chestnut Streets.  
 PRINCETON (N.J.): Miss Evelyn Roat, Eno Hall, Princeton University.  
 PROVIDENCE (R.I.): Mrs. Marguerite Cross Edgren, 47, George Street.  
 RICHMOND (Va.): Dr. E. N. Calish, 3104, Monument Ave.  
 ST. LOUIS (Mo.): Mr. J. Lionberger Davis, 312, North Eighth Street.  
 SAN FRANCISCO (Cal.): Miss Grace L. Dorey, 465, Post Street.  
 SANTA BARBARA (Cal.): Miss Pauline M. Finley, Room 23, Carillo Bldg.  
 SAVANNAH (Ga.): Mrs. John B. Seymour, 14, West Harris Street.

SEATTLE (Wash.): Miss Hope G. McMillin, 5544 Stuart Bldg.

SEWANEE (Tenn.): Professor George B. Myers, University of the South.

SPOKANE (Wash.): Mrs. Charles Hemingway Jones, 312, Sumner Street.

TACOMA (Wash.): Mrs. Metcalf Fogg, 918, North Yakima Avenue.

WASHINGTON (D.C.): Mr. Lynch Luquer, The Greenbrier, 1107, Sixteenth Street, N.W.

### ILLUMINATED ADDRESS TO THE PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES FROM GREAT BRITAIN, 1919.

On Armistice Night (1919) the London branch of the English-Speaking Union presented to the United States Ambassador for transmission to the President, an illuminated address to the people of America signed by:—

The Lord Mayor of London.	The Mayor of Lincoln.
The Lord Provost of Edinburgh.	The Mayor of Chester.
The Lord Provost of Glasgow.	The Mayor of Southampton.
The Lord Mayor of Liverpool.	The Mayor of Dover.
The Lord Mayor of Norwich.	The Mayor of Derby.
The Lord Mayor of Sheffield.	The Mayor of Portsmouth.
The Lord Mayor of Belfast.	The Mayor of Buckingham.
The Mayor of Stamford.	The Mayor of Grantham.
The Provost of Renfrew.	The Mayor of Oldham.
The Mayor of Salisbury.	The Mayor of Andover.
The Mayor of Oxford.	The Mayor of Doncaster.
The Mayor of Eastbourne.	

“To the People of the United States of America.

“Be it known by these presents that we, the undersigned Lord Mayors, Lord Provosts, and Mayors of the undermentioned cities and towns in Great Britain and Ireland, while rejoicing that with the co-operation of the American Navy and Army and that of the Allies the War has been brought to a victorious conclusion, do hereby declare on behalf of the people of these Islands our deep regret at the consequent departure from among us of the American Naval and Military forces, who have fought side by side with our soldiers and sailors with so much gallantry and success.

“We are sorry that we in this country have not been able to welcome as many of the American land forces as we should have liked owing to the exigencies of war. Those of your men, however, who have resided with us have made countless friends among our people, and we shall always retain the happiest memories of their visit. The

standard of conduct which they have set has indeed been a high one, and we can only say that we hope they will take away with them some of those feelings of affection which they have inspired during their sojourn with us."

ACKNOWLEDGMENT of the English-Speaking Union's  
ADDRESS by the United States Government, 1919.

WAR DEPARTMENT.

Washington,

26 November, 1919.

To the Lord Mayors, Lord Provosts, and Mayors of the  
Cities and Towns of Great Britain and Ireland.  
Gentlemen,

His Excellency, the American Ambassador, has transmitted to me a copy of the address signed at the dinner of the English-Speaking Union on November 15. I beg leave, on behalf of the Army of the United States to express my deep appreciation of the sentiments set forth in the Address.

The American Army was inspired throughout its entire participation in the War by the superb heroism with which the soldiers of its veteran Allies had fought and resisted the aggression of the enemy. They were further inspired by the sacrifices which the civilian populations of our Allies made for the support of their armies and of the cause. Our Army felt itself welcomed into a great company and rejoices that the victorious conclusion of the struggle is a common glory to the soldiers of the participating armies.

American soldiers temporarily resident in England were received with warm hospitality by the people of Great Britain, and I share with your Excellencies the hope that the recollection of these great engagements and of the hospitalities of your people will continue to be the basis of permanent good will and understanding between the armies and the peoples of our respective countries.

Respectfully yours,

NEWTON D. BAKER.

THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY.

Washington,

3 December, 1919.

To the Lord Mayors, Lord Provosts, and Mayors of the  
Cities and Towns of Great Britain and Ireland.

On behalf of the Navy, I wish to express my deep appreciation of the sentiments set forth in the address signed at the dinner of the English-Speaking Union on November 15.



One of the memories which the officers and men of the Navy will always cherish is that of the unbounded hospitality which was extended to them by the people of Great Britain and Ireland when their duties brought them within the confines of the United Kingdom during the Great War, and the close comradeship which existed between the fighting forces of the two great English-Speaking countries had a very particular effect in winning the victory for Right and Justice.

It will always be a source of gratification to know that the conduct of our men was of a nature as to inspire such feelings of affection in the hearts and minds of the people of Great Britain and Ireland as indicated in the communication received from their representatives.

Yours sincerely,  
JOSEPHUS DANIELS.

## FOUNDING OF THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING UNION OF THE UNITED STATES

(Incorporated in the United States).

Dinner given to Mr. Wrench by Mr. Paul D. Cravath at University Club, New York, U.S.A., May, 1920, when the English-Speaking Union of the United States, a sister society of the British organisation, was established.

Those present to whom was entrusted the control of the affairs of the English-Speaking Union in America were :—

Mr. Paul D. Cravath, 52, William Street, New York.  
Mr. E. H. Wells, 150, Nassau Street, New York.  
Mr. Charles P. Howland, 37, Wall Street, New York.  
Mr. Joseph P. Cotton, 120, Broadway, New York.  
Mr. George Rublee, University Club, Fifth Avenue, New York.  
Mr. Edwin F. Gay, 20, Vesey Street, New York.  
Mr. Jerome D. Greene, 43, Exchange Place, New York.  
Col. Robert G. Monroe, 26, Liberty Street, New York.  
Mr. Ivy L. Lee, 61, Broadway, New York.  
Col. Franklin W. McCutcheon, 24, Broad Street, New York.  
Mr. Edward W. Bok, Merion, Pa.  
Mr. W. R. Moody, Northfield, Mass.  
Mr. Allan Forbes, State Street Trust Co., Boston.  
Capt. E. T. Murphy, 27, William Street, New York.  
Mr. Gordon Auchincloss, 61, Broadway, New York.  
Hon. George W. Wickersham, 40, Wall Street, New York.  
Hon. James M. Beck, 32, Liberty Street, New York.  
Mr. Guy E. Shipley, c/o *The Churchman*, 381, Fourth Ave., New York.

Mr. Paul Fuller, Junr., 2, Rector Street, New York.  
 Mr. F. M. Wilmot, Carnegie Hero Fund, Pittsburgh, Pa.  
 Mr. E. B. Robinette, Graystock Lodge, Chestnut Hill, Pa.  
 Mr. R. Stuart Smith, Philadelphia.  
 Mr. F. N. Doubleday, Messrs. Doubleday, Page & Co., Oyster Bay,  
 Long Island, N.Y.  
 Mr. Matthew Page Andrews, 849, Park Ave., Baltimore, Md.

## FINANCIAL SUPPORTERS OF THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING UNION OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE.

Among these, apart from Mr. Alexander Smith Cochran, who gave £100 or more to the E.-S.U. in the first years of its existence were :—  
 Major the Hon. J. J. Astor, Mr. W. E. Berry (now Lord Camrose),  
 Mr. Walter S. M. Burns, Mr. Percy Chubb, Sir Percy Daniels, K.B.E.,  
 Mr. Robert Grant, Junr., Mr. James Hamilton, Mr. Albert Holt,  
 Mr. Frederick Hutter, Mr. S. B. Joel, Mr. Claude Johnson, Mr.  
 Charles A. Knight, Sir T. P. Latham, Bt., Mr. Alexander Lyle-Samuel,  
 M.P., Sir G. Mills McKay, Mr. T. P. Morgan, Mr. Francis E. Powell,  
 Mr. Gordon Selfridge, Mr. Montagu Summers, Sir Francis Trippel,  
 Mr. James White.

## THE DOVER PATROL MEMORIAL WASHINGTON PRESENTATION.

On Wednesday, April 21, 1920, at Washington, Mr. Wrench, on behalf of the Dover Patrol War Memorial Fund, presented to Mr. Josephus Daniels, Secretary of the United States Navy at Washington, a cheque for £6,000 for the erection of a monument in the United States as a lasting memorial to the spirit of co-operation which existed between the American and British Navies during the War.

In accepting the gift, after paying a tribute to the heroism of the British Navy and to the work of the Dover Patrol, Mr. Daniels said :—

“I wish to thank you for coming in person to present this latest token of the comradeship of our countries and of the men of our navies during the world War. The friendship strengthened in the stress of mutual co-operation and sacrifices in war must be cemented in devotion to world-peace and world-justice in the years of transition, and in the decades of peace that, we trust, lie before us.”

The following day the *New York Times* wrote of the presentation :—

“Few more pleasing happenings have recently been reported from Washington—where displeasing happenings have been rather recent

of late, by the way—than the presentation on Wednesday to Secretary Daniels by an Englishman of a check for £6,000 to be used in erecting somewhere on the shore of New York Bay an obelisk to commemorate the co-operation of the American and the British navies.

“That co-operation deserves to be commemorated, for it was a distinctive and successful part of the larger union of forces for a common end by which the late War, more than any other ever fought, was marked.

“When the navies of two great nations, and especially of two great nations that have had more than differences in the past, forget old jealousies and animosities, it tells much about them both and even more about the enemy that brought them together in action.

“This British gift is the more to be appreciated as coming, not from one or a few contributors, but from thousands.”

## AN ATTEMPT AT IRISH PEACE-MAKING

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### THE AIMS OF THE IRISH UNITY LEAGUE

An organisation which the author tried to start during the War.

“The Irish Unity League is a society of Irish men and Irish women the members of which believe in a United Ireland of free citizens.

“The members of the Irish Unity League believe in the great destiny which awaits United Ireland as a self-governing unit within the British Empire and they recognise that Imperial supremacy in regard to foreign policy and the disposition of the naval forces of the Crown must be maintained. They believe that the well-being of Ireland can only be realised by all Irish men and women working together.

“The members of the Irish Unity League believe that the progress of their native land has in the past been hindered by party strife and faction. They undertake to devote themselves to the promotion of the welfare of Ireland within the Empire by every means in their power.

“The members of the Irish Unity League believe in the development of Irish industries, of Irish agriculture, and of the protection of Irish financial interests generally by every constitutional means.

“The members of the Irish Unity League believe in an Ireland of healthy and prosperous citizens living in happy homes.”

Founded St. Patrick's Day, 1917.

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